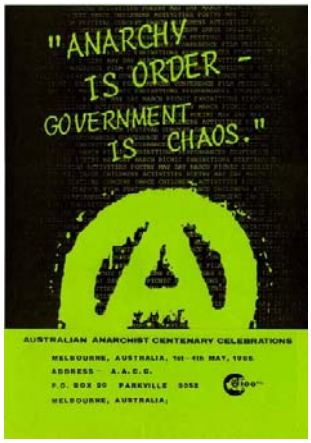
CHAZ BUFE



'LISTEN, ANARCHIST!',
'A FUTURE WORTH LIVING' &
'DESIGN YOUR OWN UTOPIA'

Anarchy Order

PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS & DISCUSSIONS
FOR LAND & FREEDOM

An introductory word to the ‘anarchive’
“Anarchy is Order!”

‘I must Create a System or be enslav’d by another Man’s.
I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create’
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has develloped as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, dissapear little by little under the dust of history.
After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives–a ‘new’ kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as ‘Anarchy is order’, ‘Property is theft’,...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disapearing.The ‘anarchive’ or ‘anarchist archive’ Anarchy is Order (in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the ‘**principles, propositions and discussions**’ of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don’t belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists an other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the ‘new anarchism’ outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this

project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

'Anarchy Is Order' does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.
Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing from the CD that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts ,...Become your own anarchive!!!
(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and autors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchive offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

'demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to
squash us like horseflies;
and the will-'o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance'.
(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don't mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism,cooperation can be send to
A.O@advalvas.be
A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

WELCOME!!

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LISTEN ANARCHIST!

CHAZ BUFE

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY JANET BIEHL AND A NEW APPENDIX

ANARCHISM: The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

ANARCHY: Absence of government; disbelief in, and disregard of, invasion and authority based on coercion and force; a condition of society regulated by voluntary agreement instead of government.

ANARCHIST: A believer in anarchism; one opposed to all forms of coercive government and invasive authority; and advocate of the absence of government as the ideal of political liberty and social harmony.

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INTRODUCTION BY JANET BIEHL

The republication of Listen, Anarchist! 13 years after its first appearance is a particularly welcome event. In only a few pages Chaz Bufe succeeds in diagnosing many of the ills of North American anarchism, both in ideas and activities. The power of the pamphlet derives not only from the pithiness of its insights and its unpretentious style, but from its clear and forceful exposition and its willingness to speak out against immorality and injustice within the movement.

Lamentably, the intervening years since 1987 have not cured the malaises Bufe diagnosed. On the contrary, they have acquired greater virulence. Fifth Estate, for example, has continued propagating its anti-technological, primitivistic, and mystical doctrines. David Watson (aka George Bradford, among other pseudonyms) has even tried, in Beyond Bookchin, to appropriate the term "social ecology" for these regressive notions, attempting to supplant a body of forward-looking, rational, and humanistic libertarian ideas with his own benighted primitivism.

At about the same time that Watson's essay appeared, an editor of the English magazine Green Anarchist came out in support of the Unabomber, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the Aum Shinrikyo cult, which released sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subway. (Green Anarchist is an anarcho-primitivist periodical that regards Fifth Estate as one of its precursors.) This appalling development showed, among other things, the merit of Bufe's criticism of primitivism and mysticism: "if anarchists reject rationality and revert to mysticism, it's a safe bet that they too will go goose-stepping off in increasingly authoritarian directions." Only

in the fall of 1997, in a discussion of Green Anarchist, did Watson finally begin to retreat from his primitivist views.

In the meantime, Robert C. Black has gone on to celebrate Anarchy After Leftism, in a book whose smokescreen of insult and vitriol hides a basic lack of ideas about what "anarchy after leftism" really represents, apart perhaps from the supremacy of self-interest. In these writings anarchism's longstanding socialist dimension is jettisoned in favor of individual escapades. Black's personal conduct has mirrored his amoral views. In 1996, he acted as a police narcotics informant against Seattle author Jim Hogshire, resulting in a police raid on Hogshire's home. [See the Loompanics Unlimited Fall 1996 Supplement, pp. 12–17 for details; see also the narcing letter from "citizen informant" Bob Black (http://www.seesharppress.com/black.html) to the Seattle Police Department.]

Many of the ills Bufe documents in Listen, Anarchist! derive ultimately from anarchism's individualistic tendency, whose animating spirit is the 19th-century anarcho-egoist Max Stirner. From the dragon's teeth that Stirner sowed have sprung, most recently, a legion of "fashion" or "life-style" anarchists who appear to be unfamiliar with anarchism's claim to constitute an ethical socialism.

In fact, one of the most disquieting observations that Bufe makes is that some anarchists have reacted to incidents of immorality and even violence with indifference: "Sure Bob Black is a destructive nut,"he quotes one as saying, "but he hasn't attacked us." Similarly, a comrade in the Netherlands —where Black's writings have, astonishingly, gained some popularity—has told me that when he tells Black's local fans of his violent and unethical activities, they respond with equal indifference. Currently in the U.S., despite

Black's narcing on Jim Hogshire—a widely known betrayal of anarchist principles (contact Loompanics for details)—at least a few vocal "anarchists" continue to support Black and his brand of amoral egoism.

Such unconcern is a far cry from the left-libertarian ethos that once proclaimed, "An injury to one is an injury to all!" Apathy in the face of immoral and unjust behavior toward one's fellow anarchists, let alone toward one's fellow human beings, reflects a grave breach of the ethical standards with which anarchists have long identified themselves, in contrast to many marxists and, especially, leninists.

Ethics lies at the heart of a truly libertarian movement that offers a vision of a cooperative and humane society. An anarchism that dismisses even gross violations of basic ethical standards with an anemic shrug has not only lost its moral high ground as the libertarian alternative to authoritarian or state socialism; it has undermined its claim to represent a movement for basic change, individual as well as social. Instead it has become a pseudo-rebellious conceit, a self-serving gloss, a passing stage of late childhood development, or as Bufe puts it very well, a fashion trend.

The diffusion of such moral indifference among anarchists would transform anarchism itself into something that most of those who once proudly used that label would scarcely recognize. Libertarians today who cherish ideas of a cooperative and just society would do well to express their outrage at immorality and violence in their own milieu as well as in the larger society, reaffirming anarchism's call for ethical renovation. Only then will we have a movement that deserves to gain wider support.

LISTEN ANARCHIST!

ANARCHISM has never found wide acceptance in North America. Neglecting the reasons why this did not happen in the past, it's necessary to ask why anarchism remains a marginal, misunderstood philosophy. Conditions certainly seem ripe for a flowering of anarchist ideas and activity. Popular mistrust of government and business, as measured by public opinion polls, is much higher than it was 25 years ago. Official unemployment figures continue to hover near seven percent, while actual unemployment is probably far higher. The suicidal madness of the arms race could hardly be plainer. And the bankruptcy of marxism is all too obvious. Marxist regimes the world over have utterly and abjectly failed to create anything approaching free, equalitarian societies.

Yet interest in anarchism and the amount of anarchist activity in North America remain pitifully small. Why? A large part of the blame must be assigned to the educational system, the mass media, organized religion, and the hierarchically structured unions which have strangled the labor movement. But external factors provide only a partial explanation. Internal factors must also be considered.

MARGINALIZATION

One major problem is the deliberate self-marginalization of a relatively large number of American anarchists. Anyone who has been around the U.S./Canadian anarchist movement for any length of time quickly becomes familiar with the "marginals" and the "fashion anarchists." (Marginals considerthemselves anarchists, while "fashion anarchists" simply use anarchist—and punk—trappings.)

These people often run around with huge circle-"A"s painted on their jackets; loudly proclaim themselves to be anarchists, and for the most part have never studied anarchist theory and couldn't offer a coherent definition of anarchism to save their lives.

The reason why such people (both marginals and "fashion anarchists") choose to label themselves as anarchists is undoubtedly, in many cases, that they believe the worst bourgeois lies about anarchism—that it's a synonym for chaos and an extreme everyone-else-be-damned form of individualism. They use "anarchism" as a blanket justification for irresponsible, antisocial behavior. (I've even heard "anarchism" used as an excuse for smoking in public places.) It's unfortunate, to say the least, that such people are the most publicly visible proponents of (what they consider) anarchism.

ANTI-WORK(ER) BIAS

A troubling aspect of the marginalized milieu is the anti-work (and often anti-worker) attitude frequently displayed by the marginals. This is unfortunate for two reasons. One is that work must be performed in order for society to exist, and adoption of in anti-work, anti-worker attitude simply begs the crucial question of how work should be organized. It's all well and good to say that work should be replaced by play, but how do we get from here to there?

The other problem is that most able-bodied people work, and it would be difficult to find a more alienating approach to those of us who work than the anti-work attitude, which in effect states: "What you're doing (work) is worse than useless, and you're stupid for doing it," while offering no

alternative whatsoever. This problem is aggravated by the fact that some anti-work advocates, who could work but choose not to, practice a form of parasitism—they receive money from the government (extorted from those who work). It's rather difficult to take seriously those who rail against work while grasping a black flag in one hand and a welfare check in the other. (However, these comments should not be construed as an attack on welfare recipients. Unemployment is built into the economy, and it's undeniably fortunate that forms of relief are available to its victims. But for those who most stringently condemn the state—anarchists—to deliberately rely on it as their means of support, robs them of credibility.)

ANTI-ORGANIZATIONAL BIAS

An extreme anti-organizational bias often goes hand in hand with deliberate self-marginalization and an anti-work attitude. This often comes from lack of study of anarchist theory. Virtually all of the most prominent anarchist theoreticians and activists, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Berkman, and Goldman among them, have been in favor of organization. What these thinkers were concerned with was not whether there should be organization but rather how things should be organized.

But that doesn't matter to rabid anti-organizationalists. Several years ago a writer in the Fifth Estate labeled my advocacy of the classic anarchist position (that it's how, not whether, things should be organized) as "leninist"; and I recently heard another anti-organizational type claim that all organization is inherently "capitalist." Such persons cannot be taken seriously—they have no concern for the real meanings of the terms they employ and merely throw

them around as epithets—but one shudders to think of the impression they leave with anyone coming in casual contact with them. (A politically active friend recently told me that after encounters with several of the local marginalists she had the impression that anarchists were uncooperative, irresponsible, and selfish.)

Preaching rejection of organization is suicidal for the anarchist movement. Most people have the common sense to realize that some form of organization is necessary for society to survive. When they hear those who publicly identify themselves as anarchists loudly intoning against organization of any type, they tend to dismiss not only the anti-organizational position, but also anarchism, as being hopelessly unrealistic. This, of course, makes it far more difficult to reach people no matter how reasonable your arguments are if you call yourself an anarchist—they'll simply lump you in with the anti-organizational fringe.

Anti-organizational bias also has a destructive effect within the anarchist community. It makes it difficult to organize major projects. When through dint of hard work and investment of your limited free time and money you do succeed in organizing a project, you'll almost certainly be attacked by the anti-organizational fringe as being "leninist," "stalinist," "capitalist," etc. (Pick your own abusive adjective, never mind what it really means.)

VIOLENCE

Violence is another major problem in anarchist circles. Fortunately, very little actual violence is being perpetrated by anarchists at present, but a casual observer of the anarchist scene would probably conclude the exact

opposite. There are several reasons for this. One, which we can't do much about, is the media's constant misuse of the term "anarchist" to describe leftist terrorism of any type. Another equally maddening reason is the tendency of certain anarchist publications to praise leftist political violence no matter who is engaging in it or for what reasons, as long as those committing the violence mouth "anti-imperialist" rhetoric. Open Road has even recently begun to carry as an enclosure a publication called Resistance, which uncritically praises authoritarian, avowedly Marxist-Leninist groups such as ETA and the Red Brigades.

A couple of years ago an even more appalling piece of writing appeared in a now-defunct periodical called The Spark. In the piece, a writer named G. Michael O'Hara rambled on about how it might be necessary to blow up Washington D.C. with a nuclear bomb even though a few innocent people might get hurt. From reading such drivel the uninformed could easily conclude that anarchists are completely amoral and that the main thrust of anarchism is violence for its own sake. The harm such writing does is incalculable.

Another regrettable fact is that the linkage of violence and anarchism can be profitable. The worst example of this profiteering is The Anarchist Cookbook, a publication which combines incredibly muddled and misleading comments about anarchism with hazardous (to the maker) explosive formulas and drug recipes which simply don't work. The publisher of this dangerous, misleading book continues to produce it year after year simply because it sells—it makes a nice coffee table ornament.

A more ominous reason why anarchism is linked to violence is that occasionally well-meaning people read articles romanticizing violence in publications such as The Spark or Open Road, and then, out of desperation or misplaced idealism, go out and commit violent acts, almost always getting themselves busted in the process. The Vancouver Five are a recent example. After pulling off several bombings and arson attacks, they were arrested. What did they accomplish? They're all rotting in jail at the moment and will be for years to come. Thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of time were wasted on defense committee work. The media circus surrounding their acts and trials helped to further identify anarchism with violence and helped to create an atmosphere of hysteria which gave the Canadian government a perfect excuse to ram through repressive legislation. The only people who benefited from the Vancouver Five case, besides those in power, were, presumably, those who batten off the legal process.

(Those interested in further discussion of the question of violence would do well to read You Can't Blow Up A Social Relationship and Luigi Fabbri's classic, Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism.)

SECTARIANISM

Internal relations within the anarchist movement are in terrible shape. In addition to open disagreement, which is only to be expected, we're also faced with fractious sectarianism. There are several aspects to this. One is that those who are openly sectarian often spend most, if not all, of their energy attacking other anarchists. A second is that sectarians make personal attacks and usually couch them in abusive, often scatological language. A third is that

sectarians deliberately misuse emotionally charged terms such as "purge" and "censorship" in order to justify their actions and to manipulate others.

An incident involving No Middle Ground provides an unfortunate example of sectarianism at work. The last several meetings before the publication of the most recent issue were nightmares of ranting, screaming infighting In fact, the situation was so bad that after the last issue of the magazine hit the streets in February 1985, there was an unspoken consensus that the project was dead.

But many of us who worked on NMG felt that Latin American solidarity work is too important to abandon, so in April of 1985 we held a couple of meetings to discuss reviving the magazine or starting a new project. We made no secret of these meetings, but we did not invite the person whom a majority of us held responsible for most of the infighting. In retrospect, it might have made things easier in the long run if we had invited her; but at the time we were so burned out from the prolonged infighting that we couldn't stand the thought of more anger, screaming and personal abuse—things which would have been a certainty had she been present. When she discovered that we had discussed reviving the magazine, but without her, she wouldn't accept the fact that we found her so abusive and disruptive that we chose to disassociate ourselves from her. Instead of accepting that fact and going to work on another anti-authoritarian project, she chose to spend seemingly all her time and energy attacking those of us who want nothing to do with her. In one particularly reprehensible act she posted leaflets in the financial district naming two Processed World people (one a current office worker involved with No Middle Ground) which stated that they advocated sabotage of office equipment; apparently the fact

that employers could have seen those leaflets mattered not a whit to her.

Her reason for attacking us? We "purged" her. Evidently she feels that because she was once part of the NMG project, she has a proprietary interest in it, and that if the project continues, we must include her in it regardless of our wishes to the contrary. That is, because of her perceived proprietary interest, she feels that the rest of us who worked on the project should not have full freedom over how and with whom we spend our time and energy. And this from a "rabid anti-authoritarian."

In this context, the use of the term "purge" can be seen for what it is: emotional manipulation. "Purge" conjures up all sorts of nasty images of Stalin, show trials and firing squads. To use it as a synonym for simple disassociation is grotesque.

Another example of deliberate misuse of terms is the habit of anarcho-sectarians to label those with whom they disagree as "leninists." This accusation has recently been leveled against Processed World. A brief look at the facts will show the stupidity and dishonesty of this accusation:

Do the Processed World staff advocate vanguard parties? No. Do they advocate a "workers' state" or the "dictatorship of the proletariat"? No. Do they advocate hierarchical structure of any type? No. In fact, they advocate direct action and direct democracy. If that's "leninism," I'm the Antichrist.

A very disturbing development is the deliberate attempt to mislead, above and beyond the leveling of false accusations. A recent incident involving "George Bradford"

(David Watson) of the Fifth Estate, is illustrative. "Bradford" wrote an abusive and irrational letter to the editor of The Match (issue 79). Match editor Fred Woodworth demolished "Bradford's" arguments in a reply. Rather than attempt to openly answer what Woodworth had to say (which would have been a difficult task), the Fifth Estate staff decided to mislead their readers. They printed no direct reply to Fred's comments. Instead, "Bradford" fabricated (he's admitted this), and Fifth Estate printed, a "letter to the editor" which badly distorted Fred Woodworth's position; and Fifth Estate headed, signed and returned-addressed the letter in such a way that it could easily have misled readers familiar with the U.S. anarchist scene into thinking that Fred wrote it. What makes this especially reprehensible is that the fake "letter to the editor" made racist statements.

Upon seeing this fabrication, Fred immediately wrote a letter marked "intended for publication" to the Fifth Estate. His letter pointed out the dishonesty and destructive effects of publishing fabrications.

The Fifth Estate didn't print Fred's letter. Instead, it printed the following "clarification": "Fred Woodworth, editor of The Match!, P. 0. Box 3488, Tucson, AZ wrote recently to inform us that he was NOT the author of a letter which appeared in our last issue signed 'Tall King AZ Hole.' We are sorry if this created any confusion."

The hypocrisy of this "clarification" is astounding. If they didn't want to create confusion, why did "Bradford" fabricate the "letter to the editor"? Why did he head it, sign it and return address it (using Fred Woodworth's zip code) in such a way that suspicion could easily have been aroused that Fred wrote it? Why did Fifth Estate print it?

And why didn't they want to print Woodworth's comments about the fabrication? In all probability it's because they would have shown what type of dirty, dishonest game "Bradford" and the Fifth Estate were playing. So, the Fifth Estate staff lied and said they were "sorry,"and conveniently forgot to tell readers that "Bradford" had forged the "letter."

VIOLENT ATTACKS

As unethical as the Fifth Estate's actions have been, however, the Fifth Estate staff have not physically assaulted those with whom they disagree. Others have. Over the last two years a relentless campaign of verbal abuse, physical harassment and violent attacks has been carried out against Processed World (PW).

Two years ago, Robert C. Black, Jr., attorney at law (also known as Bob Black and "The Last International") began to attack Processed World in various publications, among them Bluff, the SRAF Bulletin, and San Francisco's Appeal to Reason. Shortly after these printed attacks began, flyers were posted in the San Francisco financial district revealing the names of writers using pseudonyms in Processed World; this appears to have been an attempt to cause them to lose employment. (Most of the people who work on the magazine are office workers.) Flyers were also posted in staffers' neighborhoods vilifying them and listing their home addresses and telephone numbers. When staff members removed these violations of their privacy, there were immediate cries of "censorship" from Black's cronies. (There was, of course, no indication on the leaflets as to who produced or posted them.)

In 1984 the attacks were stepped up. Processed World's office lock was epoxied and in September a worker on the magazine received a middle-of-the-night death threat against her and her baby. In October, Robert C. Black, Jr., attorney at law, filed a complaint with the San Francisco Planning Commission over alleged zoning violations in Processed World's office. The following month, PW was forced to move after the Planning Commission discovered that the roof in its office was only seven feet high rather than the required eight. PW then moved to its present location in a warehouse shared with several other people. That same month an ax was placed through the magazine's office door in the middle of the night.

In 1985 things really got nasty. During the spring someone began slashing copies of the magazine with razor blades in bookstores in San Francisco and the East Bay. In April, flyers (again bearing no indication of their origin) urging that PW's new office be "torched," and which listed the new address, were posted in the financial district. In the same month Robert C. Black produced a xeroxed tract noteworthy primarily for his vicious personal attacks and disgusting vulgarity (calling one person whom he doesn't even know a "butt fuckee," for example). The next step was physical assault. On April 19, Black was arrested for physically assaulting a Processed World staff member hawking copies of the magazine on the sidewalks of the financial district. His arrest came about in a curious way. After the incident occurred, Black went running to the cops in an attempt to get the PW staffer arrested for assault. But fortunately, several passersby had witnessed the incident and identified Black as the assailant. So Black was arrested, hauled off and booked. In May he failed to show up for his arraignment on the battery charge and a warrant was issued

for his arrest.Finally, in June, one of the residents of the warehouse in which Processed World has its office was returning home from a show at 3:00 a.m., and when he got home he found a person pouring gasoline all over the front of the building.

All of this is very disturbing. The reaction (more accurately, non-reaction) of many San Francisco anarchists, is perhaps even more disturbing. While all of these extremely vicious, FBI provocateur-type actions were being perpetrated, one continually heard comments among anarchists, such as: "Why should we worry about it? They're (the PW staff) not really anarchists"; "Fuck both sides. I've heard [a PW staffer] badmouthing us. Why should we help them?" And, perhaps most revealingly: "Sure, Bob Black is a destructive nut. But he hasn't attacked us." So, many anarchists just sat on their hands. After all, it wasn't their problem. Instead of sticking to the principle, "An injury to one is an injury to all," they adopted the more convenient "Every man for himself!"

Even worse, a few marginalist anarcho-sectarians, because of personal feuds with Processed World staff members, actually sided against them. One individual took a cue from the "right to life" honchos' comments about abortion clinic bombings, and wrote in the journal of the Bound Together Bookstore that he wouldn't do such things himself, but that he could "understand" the motivations of those who make anonymous death threats. It speaks volumes of the destructive effects of sectarianism that it can lead any anarchist to condone such cowardly, provocateur-like acts.

MISUSE OF TERMS

An underlying reason for much of the confusion and bickering in the North American anarchist movement is the imprecise use and misuse of terminology. We've already seen examples of it in which the terms "leninist" and "purge" were deliberately misused by sectarians. They're also in the habit of misusing the term "censorship." On one hand we find those who feel (they never define the terms they use) that censorship somehow consists of withholding one's cooperation from publications—in not lending one's time, labor, space, and money to selling or distributing certain publications. On the other, we find those who feel that "Censorship is something we do all the time, so what's the big deal about censoring something?" (Those who operate under this definition never, of course, define their terms either.) An incident at Bound Together Books involved the first usage. Two of Bob Black's allies strongly urged that the bookstore carry the crude, scatological tract Bob Black had published. Their reason? It would be "censorship" not to carry it.

The stupidity of this use of the term is obvious. If "censorship" consists of withholding cooperation, the term loses all real meaning. It's obviously impossible to lend one's efforts to the distribution of all available publications (or even all those which would like you to assist them—which would probably include all extant marxist publications), so under this definition everyone, everywhere is constantly practicing "censorship," and the term becomes completely meaningless. It turns into nothing more than a frightening buzzword useful only as a means of sowing confusion and intimidating those with whom one disagrees.

An interesting instance of the "what's the big deal?" use of the term can be found in issue number eight of an Australian tabloid called Everything. In an article titled

"Censorship & Pornography," an anonymous writer maintains that "Censorship is common all through our society. Children are censored by adults . . ." etc., etc., in an attempt to justify the use of censorship by anarchists. Naturally, she never defines what she means by "censorship." What do these "anarchist" advocates of censorship mean by this word? I recently heard one state that "Every time you turn off the radio or TV you're committing censorship." (Again, notice that he doesn't define the term.) The interesting thing about this usage is that, like the other, it renders "censorship" completely meaningless in that everyone, everywhere is constantly practicing "censorship."

The real difference between those who feel that censorship consists of withholding cooperation and those who are of the what's-the-big-deal school lies in the way they employ the term. The first group uses it as a means of manipulation and intimidation, of bludgeoning those with whom they disagree into submission. The second group uses it as a license to do anything they want, no matter how coercive or violent (such as bombing adult bookstores). When those who misuse the term in this manner run into real censorship, all they can do is impotently howl, "We're right. You're wrong" in the face of the censors. And that's not a convincing argument. Both uses of the term sow confusion, sow contempt for the anarchist movement among those concerned with civil liberties and correct use of language, and, ultimately, make it more difficult to combat the evil of real censorship. For both uses trivialize the term.

The central problem with both of these uses is that they ignore the defining characteristic of censorship: coercion. My dictionary defines censorship as the "act of censoring," and it defines censor as "an official who examines books,

plays, news programs, etc., for the purpose of suppressing parts deemed objectionable on moral, political, military, or other grounds." So, censorship is defined here as a state activity, and what is the state other than organized force, violence and coercion?

Most people, however, would probably prefer a slightly broader definition. A reasonable common-usage definition would be: "Censorship: the prevention of anyone from freely expressing him or herself, and/or the prevention of anyone seeing, hearing, or reading any form of expression, through the use of coercion or force." Of course, if you enjoy playing the "what if" game, you can probably come up with a few cases in which this definition might not yield a clear decision on whether some hypothetical act constitutes censorship. But in real life this definition will provide a clear test in virtually all instances.

OBSCURANTISM

One major reason why anarchist, "antiauthoritarian" if you will, publications are often all but unreadable is the use of obscurantist terminology. All too many pamphlets and periodicals read as if they were written by sociologists. The guiding principle--which could be termed the "academic writing syndrome"--in this type of writing is to never use a single, simple word when an ambiguous, but pretentious, seven-word phrase is available.

An example of this type of verbal exhibitionism can be found in Bob Black's letter to the editor in issue no. 79 of The Match!:

[A]s I've noted, in social life at its (con)sensual and satisfying best-sex, conversation, creation-taking from and giving to others constitute a single play-activity rich with multiplier effects. For the lucid and ludic egoist, anything less than generalized egoism is just not enough. In other words, "All Aboard!"

This statement looks impressive. It sounds impressive. But what on earth does it actually mean? Who knows? It's hard to imagine a piece of writing further removed from George Orwell's dictum that political writing should be as transparent as a pane of glass.

Examples of muddy, situationist-influenced writing can also be found with great frequency in the pages of the Fifth Estate. An example (which they chose to highlight) from the July 1981 issue is typical: "Technology is capital, the triumph of the inorganic, humanity separated from its tools and universally dependent on the apparatus." I showed this statement to several of my coworkers and none of them could make head or tail of it. Several thought it was typical academic blather; and not one thought it had anything to do with day-to-day life.

BACK TO THE CAVES

The preceding quotation illustrates yet another serious problem in the North American anarchist movement--a blind rejection of science, rationality and technology. Those who hold this position rarely bother to differentiate between the three; but technology is their primary whipping boy.

There are several disturbing aspects to this position. Foremost is the fact that those who are most vehement in

their opposition to technology can't even provide a coherent definition of what it is. When pressed, they'll generally say something about a "system of global domination," or the like, as if that imparted any real information.

A notable feature of the anti-technology fringe is their refusal to get down to specifics. They'll spend thousands upon thousands of words attacking technology in the abstract, but will rarely discuss specific aspects of it. When they do, they invariably pick the easiest possible targets, things such as nuclear and automotive technologies, technologies which are so obviously and overwhelmingly harmful that they would be drastically reduced if not eliminated outright in any type of sane society.

And yet, while they blanketly condemn technology, the antitech fringe assert that it's unfair to paint them as wanting to go back and live in caves, that they "never" have advocated "destroying all machines." (Fifth Estate, December 31, 1980.) That's fine. But where do they draw the line? Which technologies—machines, if you prefer—do they want to keep? Which do they want to get rid of? And why? Those are tough questions, yet the anti-tech "neo-primitivist" faction, of which the Fifth Estate is the leading voice, refuses to answer them. Tellingly, after denying that they advocate destruction of all machines, the Fifth Estate writers quoted above launched off into generalized denunciations of technology, never once getting down to specifics as to what they wish to retain and what they wish to jettison. The anti-technology fringe will deserve serious consideration when they answer those tough questions. But chances are they never will. If they'd admit that any aspect of technology is beneficial, their blanket critique would fall apart. It'd be extremely difficult, for example, to make a case that we'd be better off without antibiotics and

carpentry, and that we'd be better off if smallpox were still rampant. (Smallpox has been eradicated by medical technology.)

Rather than produce a meaningful (specific) critique, we can expect our anti-technology ranters to continue to produce blanket denunciations of technology, science and rationality couched in obscure situationist jargon, to continue to produce obsequious odes to "primitive peoples" which ignore or downplay the defects (patriarchy, for example) in primitive societies, to continue to attack the easiest possible technological targets, and to continue to dishonestly dismiss those who disagree with them as Chamber of Commerce booster types. And all this while they continue to make use of computers and modem printing technology, and continue to live comfortably in heavily industrialized areas.

REVERSION TO MYSTICISM

As bad as all this is, it's made much worse by a rejection of rationality and what Fred Woodworth has aptly termed "a very serious and almost unbelievable trend in modern radicalism: the reversion to mysticism and superstition." Again, the Fifth Estate is in the forefront. An article in the above-mentioned issue of the Fifth Estate baldly states: "Rationality is a curse since it can cause humans to forget the natural order of things. A wolf never forgets his or her place in the natural order. Europeans do." Other examples of irrationality and mystical maunderings abound in Fredy Perlman's recent tract, Against His-Story, Against Leviathan, a large portion of which was printed in the Fifth Estate. In it, Perlman babbles on about such things as

"orgiastic communion with the beyond," and being "possessed by the spirit of a tree."

While this may appear to be harmless lunacy, it's not. Rejection of rationality and reversion to mysticism are serious problems. For once you abandon rationality, how do you determine right from wrong? How do you determine what's in your self interest from what isn't? Without rationality you have two choices: you can follow the leader and obey the prescriptions of others; or, you can follow your impulses—do what "feels right"—a choice that more often than not leads back to the first.

Using unexamined impulse as a means of decision-making is very dangerous because we've all been subjected to constant authoritarian conditioning since birth, and our impulses will inevitably be influenced to some degree by that conditioning. For example, it obviously "felt right" to a large segment of the German working class to support Hitler during the 1920s and '30s. But was it in their self-interest to do so? Without rationally analyzing the question, how could they have known that what "felt right" to them was absolutely contrary to their own interests. Without rationality there was no way they could have known. Rational thinking was necessary, but they didn't do it. Instead, they goose-stepped into the holocaust with the mystical abstractions of god and fatherland dancing in their heads.

And if anarchists reject rationality and revert to mysticism, it's a safe bet that they too will go goose-stepping off in increasingly authoritarian directions.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

We should avoid the use of violence except in self-defense and in revolutionary situations. We should especially avoid the use of violence in its most vanguardist and elitist form: urban guerrillaism. This will help make plain who the real terrorists are (the state and religious and marxist bomb throwers).

We should avoid deliberate self-marginalization. If we ever want anarchism to become a mass movement rather than some type of exclusive club, we need to listen to and to address mainstream people, people who for the most part are turned off by marginalization.

We should attack irrationality and mysticism wherever and whenever they arise. If people are ever to break free of the chains of mystical abstractions such as god and country, they'll need to think clearly, rationally.

We must refuse to tolerate personal abuse, physical harassment and outright violence of the type recently directed against Processed World. Even if we're not directly attacked, we need to realize that such attacks poison the political and social atmosphere and make it much more difficult to do effective work. An injury to one is still an injury to all.

We should take great care—especially in printed matter—to employ simple, clear language. Idiosyncratic use of terms should be avoided. Use of abstractions should be avoided where, possible. And verbal grand-standing and use of contorted situationist terminology must be avoided. If you have something worth saying, say it so that it can be easily understood: in plain English.

We should look askance at those who attack other anarchists using emotionally loaded terms such as "leninist," "stalinist," "purge," and "censorship." What such attacks reveal at least nine times out of ten—and at least 99 times out of 100 when abusive scatological terms are also used—is that those who make them are destructive sectarians pursuing personal vendettas. Such persons should be ignored when possible and exposed when necessary.

We should not tolerate dishonesty and personal attacks. There's a huge difference between attacking a person's ideas and attacking that person. The first is healthy and enlivens debate; the second is unhealthy, poisons the atmosphere and leads to splits and infighting.

We should not cower behind pseudonyms or anonymity when we criticize the ideas of other anarchists—and especially if we're stupidly launching personal attacks. Regrettably, it's sometimes necessary to employ a pseudonym or to remain anonymous when attacking the rich and powerful. But there's never an excuse for such behavior when criticizing other anarchists who are as powerless as you. That's simple cowardice.

We should accept the fact that freedom of association implies freedom to disassociate. If we can't work with others, or they can't work with us, we should accept it and move on. We have better things to do than to attack each other. Our real enemies are still the state, capitalism and religion.

We should attempt to live our lives as nearly in accord with anarchist ideals as we can. It's not possible to live a completely anarchist life in capitalist society, but we can try. Those around us will take us—and anarchism—more

seriously if they see that we do our best to practice what we preach.

AFTERWORD
(TO THE 1987 PRINTING)

Reaction to my recent writings, particularly to Listen, Anarchist! and to my review of Fredy Perlman's eccentric tract, Against His-Story, has been predictable. While many have made favorable comments, I've also become, as Fred Woodworth predicted in his review of my pamphlet, a "bitterly hated . . . and denounced" person. What is interesting about these denunciations is that none contradict any statements of fact that I made, some were produced by people hiding behind pseudonyms, and all consist of personal attacks primarily, along with a few outright lies.

When I complained of this—personal abuse instead of discussion of issues—to Fifth Estate devotee, Brian Kane, who had produced, xeroxed and distributed a particularly nasty bit of personal trashing titled, appropriately enough, "Turning a Deaf Ear," his reply was highly revealing: (this is a paraphrase, but the meaning is preserved): "You've got to expect it. After all, don't you think the personal is political?" This reply speaks volumes. Behind it lie extremely odd conceptions of anarchism and of "the personal as political."

To me that phrase means that in our daily lives we should be honest, respect the rights of others, practice the principle of mutual aid, and generally do our best to live up to our values. (I'm no saint and do not always live up to those ideals, but neither does anyone else; all that we can do is to try our best.) My attacker's concept of "the personal as political" is quite evidently very different. He conceives of it not as a guidepost for personal behavior, but rather as a justification to personally attack anyone with whom he or his hate-filled cohorts happen to disagree.

Behind this disagreement over the meaning of "the personal as political" lie totally opposed interpretations of the meaning of anarchism. To me anarchism means the renunciation of government and all other forms of coercive authority, and the embracement of the principles of voluntarism, mutual aid, and ethical personal conduct. My attackers have accused me of "moralizing," and in a sense they're right. I consider ethical behavior to be the bedrock of anarchism. For without ethical behavior trust becomes impossible. Without trust there is no basis for free association or mutual aid. And without free association and mutual aid, the possibility of an anarchist society vanishes.

Those who have attacked me totally discount the importance of ethics. They proudly proclaim themselves "egoists" and renounce ethics of any type. In other words, they proudly proclaim that they've swallowed the worst authoritarian lies about anarchism, hook, line, and sinker—that anarchism consists of rejection of ethics, rejection of all forms of organization, and the embracement of an extreme form of egoism, or individualism, which recognizes no one's rights other than the egoist's. They've swallowed the lie that Anarchy equals chaos.

Given their rejection of ethics, it was entirely predictable that they would react to my writings with personal trashing rather than discussion of issues. This is entirely in line with their history of engaging in or condoning such practices as making anonymous death threats, vandalizing the offices of political opponents, using the state legal apparatus against political opponents, and violently physically assaulting political opponents. Those who commit or condone such acts see nothing inherently wrong with them when directed at those of us whom they see as obstacles to the

achievement of their screwball conception of Anarchy—if, in fact, they're interested in achieving anything beyond ideology-driven howling. They believe the end (chaos/amoral egoism) justifies the means. Thus they end up not only proclaiming the worst authoritarian lies about anarchism (that it consists of unbridled egoism and rejection of organization), but they also end up adopting the philosophical foundation of the capitalist society they profess to hate so much, as their guiding principle—that the ends justify the means.

The belief that the ends justify the means is the cornerstone of authoritarianism. It's the antithesis of anarchism. The cornerstone of anarchism is the belief that means determine ends.

If anarchism is ever to be a real force in this society it must be based on ethical behavior—not on that sick parody of anarchism, amoral individualism.

PRIMITIVE THOUGHT(1)

0ne of the hottest topics in "progressive" circles these days is the Earth First! controversy. Prominent members of Earth First!, such as Dave Foreman, the organization's founder and the editor of its newspaper, have recently undertaken polemics in favor of famine and AIDS.

In the Australian magazine Simply Living, Foreman stated that, "the best thing would be to just let the people there [Ethiopia] starve . . ." He has made similar statements to the local media in Tucson, where Earth First! (the organ of Earth First!) is published. [This was in 1988; the paper and its editorial collective have changed radically—and for the better—since then.]

In a similar vein, "Miss Ann Thropy," a regular contributor to Earth First!, has argued that AIDS is a "good" thing, because it will reduce population. In the May 1, 1987 issue of that paper, "Miss Throp" stated: ". . . if the AIDS epidemic didn't exist, radical environmentalists would have to invent one [an epidemic]." In the Dec. 22, 1987 issue of Earth First!, he or she adds that ". . . the AIDS epidemic, rather than being a scourge, is a welcome development in the inevitable reduction of human population."

The connecting thread between the arguments in favor of AIDS and starvation is a crude Malthusianism. (The 19th-century British parson Thomas Malthus argued, in his Essay on the Principle of Population, that unlimited population growth was the primary danger to humanity; that population increased geometrically while food supply increased arithmetically.) A latter day disciple of the good parson, Daniel Conner, a "deep ecologist," self-aggrandizingly expressed his faith in Malthus' principle in

the Dec. 22, 1987 issue of Earth First!: "Population pressure, they ['thoughtful environmentalists'] claim, lies at the root of every environmental problem we face."

Contrary to what Conner would have us believe, there is nothing "thoughtful" in the belief that population "lies at the root of every environmental problem." That idea is on a par with the simplistic belief that "technology" is the sole cause of environmental destruction. It ignores the key element in environmental destruction: profit. For example, coal-burning power plants are a primary cause of acid rain, yet utilities have invariably put up resistance to installing scrubbers, which would greatly reduce the amount of pollutants emitted by their plants. The reason? Installing scrubbers would reduce their profits. Another example: Plastic beverage containers become non-recyclable trash, are a visual blight, take hundreds, if not thousands of years to break down, and a particularly toxic type of plastic, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), is often used in their manufacture. (PVCs leach into beverages.) Why are they used? The answer is what you'd expect: It's cheaper and involves less hassle for beverage manufacturers and distributors to use plastic bottles rather than recyclable glass. Still another example is the toxic waste problem. One reads almost daily reports of companies dumping dangerous wastes into streams and rivers rather than going to the expense of treating and properly disposing of them.

This tendency of the capitalist, profit-based system toward environmental destruction exists regardless of the size of the population. In terms of the profit-motive tendency toward environmental destruction, it would make no difference if the population of the United States was 24 million rather than 244 million [in 1988, when this was written]. At the lower population figure, the motivation for

beverage manufacturers and distributors to use plastic bottles, for example, would be the same as it is now. A large population magnifies the damage rooted in the profit motive, but population size itself is not "at the root of every environmental problem we face."

The conclusions the misanthropic "deep ecologists" draw from their faulty premises are breathtaking. They want us to return to our "natural role" as hunter-gatherers, because, according to their faulty reasoning, "Earth simply cannot support five billion large mammals of the species Homo sapiens." This argument has been demolished elsewhere; the best work on the subject, is Frances Moore Lappe's and Joseph Collins' Food First. For our purposes, suffice it to say that there is actually a huge surplus of food at present. According to Lappe, approximately 3600 calories of grain alone is produced on a daily per capita basis.(2) That doesn't even take into account fruits, vegetables and grass-fed meat. This is enough food that, if the grain alone were equally distributed and all—or even two-thirds—of it consumed, most of us would be as fat as pigs. It should also be emphasized that production of this amount of food does not "necessarily" involve environmental degradation: Non-environmentally harmful, organic methods of agriculture can produce at least as much food as destructive, chemically-based methods in the short run; and in the long run, they can increase the "value" of land and preserve high levels of production.

In some of the European countries, notably Germany, population "decline" through lowering of the birth rate has already begun. In his article "Fertility in Transition," in the Spring 1986 issue of World Focus (journal of the American Geographical Society), James L. Newman traces the causes of the decline in fertility in the European countries. He

concludes that there were three reasons for a decline in the birth rate. One was industrialization: "Out of it came the public health discoveries that reduced mortality, followed by a new lifestyle which no longer necessitated large families. . . . Whereas on farms and in cottage industries children contributed their labor to the family enterprise, in the city they became consumers. Only a few offspring could be afforded if the family was to maintain or . . . improve its standard of living."(3) The second reason for the decline in fertility was birth control. It "was the answer to these new social and economic realities."

The third element in lowering the birth rate was the relative emancipation of women. In the developed countries, birth rates tend to be high only among economically deprived groups with little hope and relatively little access to birth control devices and information, and among patriarchal religious groups whose members believe that it is a woman's "duty" to have a large number of children. (A case in point is the Mormon church; among active Mormons, nuclear families with "at least" four children are the norm.)

If there were a more equal distribution of wealth and income, and if misogynistic, patriarchal religions declined, the birth rate in the developed countries would almost certainly be lower than it already is; and if there were relatively rapid development in the "underdeveloped" countries, accompanied by redistribution of wealth and abandonment of misogynist religions and attitudes, fertility there would certainly decrease, probably quite rapidly.

The primitivists at least have the honesty to accept some of the conclusions of their Malthusian arguments. They acknowledge that reversion to our "natural role" of hunter-gatherers would require a massive depopulation of the

Earth. For "Miss Ann Thropy," "Ecotopia would be a planet with about 50 million people who are hunting and gathering for subsistence."(4) Other primitivists have postulated a population of only five to ten million as the maximum, and in Atlas of World Population History, Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones state that the prehistoric population of huntergatherers was probably in the neighborhood of four million.

Other "neo-primitivists" (it sounds classier with the prefix) have advocated an agrarian society using no technology beyond that of simple hand tools. Reaching a "no-tech" agricultural society would involve almost as many deaths as reaching a hunter-gatherer society. The last period in which a large majority of the population lived a pastoral existence, using for the most part nothing beyond hand tools, was the Middle Ages, when the world population was about 300 million. Let's assume a technological level of the year1500 (perhaps acceptable to no-or low-tech advocates, and at which point world population was roughly 400 million), and that, due to improved agricultural techniques, enough food could be grown and distributed to support five times the population that lived then. That would leave us with a population of 2 billion people (which would require a modest 60 percent reduction in population to achieve). [Today, it would require a 67% reduction.] Whether even this population figure could be maintained at that level of technology is highly questionable.

Historically, the ability to grow food has not been the limiting factor in population growth. The limiting factors have been disease and the related problem of infant mortality. Returning to the preindustrial technological level of 500 years ago would not only eliminate the "means" of combatting disease but also (relatively) safe, effective

means of birth control. The birth rate would soar, and many women would die at an early age, worn out from childbearing. But not to worry—population balance would be maintained the way it was in the good old days: Most children would die from disease before adulthood; and if "enough" of them didn't die, population would increase to the point where famine would stabilize the population.

Still another question never addressed by neo-primitive romantics is whether a majority of the population (let alone the entire population) would ever want to renounce the many benefits of technological civilization. I for one would not, whether we speak of music, food, medicine, or books. I doubt that my feelings are atypical. Considering that most people almost certainly enjoy the benefits of living in an advanced technological society, and want to continue to do so, returning to a low-tech or no-tech society would necessarily involve the use of coercion against large numbers of people, probably against a large majority of the population.

These are the implications which the primitivists and "neo-primitivists" have dodged until now, usually by insisting upon "natural" checks on population growth, such as the AIDS epidemic and famine, to achieve their desired huntergatherer society. They haven't dared advocate what would really be required to achieve their vision: wholesale coercion and mass murder.

If any good is to come from this controversy it will be that it has provoked many people to take a closer look at the questions of technology and population growth, and their relation to the prevailing politico-economic systems. One hopes that environmentalists will go beyond the crude theories and intellectual posturing of "deep ecologists" and

those who blindly hate "technology." The questions of population and technology require a more sophisticated approach than primitivism.

The only way in which population growth can be checked in a humane manner is through social justice—through abolition of (private and state) capitalism with its inherent tendencies toward environmental degradation; through fairer distribution of resources; through the emancipation of women and the abandonment of patriarchal religions; and through the utilization of appropriate technologies to provide cheap, easy access to birth control and to provide a comfortable level of material wealth for everyone.(5)

1. First published in Processed World #22, Summer 1988, pp. 16-17
2. "The Politics of Food," TV Documentary
3. Newman, of course is not implying that all aspects of European industralization were beneficial. He's merely noting that the rising standard of living attributable to industrialization was instrumental in lowering the birth rate.
4. "Miss Ann Thropy," Earth First!, December 22, 1987
5. Of course I am not implying that all technologies are desirable—far from it. "Technology" is not a monolith. It is composed of a great number of separate technologies, all with different environmental and social effects. Some are beneficial, such as medical and sewage disposal technologies; some are neutral (in that they lend themselves to both socially useful and socially damaging uses), an example being radio communications technology, which can be used to dispatch ambulances or for political surveillance; and some technologies, such as nuclear technology, are inherently destructive. Even these classifications are gross simplifications, though, as even the most useful technology will have some negative effects; and even the worst technology might have some beneficial aspects. And the various technologies (steel production and semiconductor production, for example) used in supporting other technologies (such as automotive and

computer technologies) will all have their own positive and negative aspects. Blind rejection of "technology" is, to put it mildly, simplistic at best.

A FUTURE WORTH LIVING: THOUGHTS ON GETTING THERE

CHAZ BUFE

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See Sharp Press
P.O. Box 1731
Tucson, AZ 85702
Phone: (520) 628-8720
Fax: (520) 628-8720

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A FUTURE WORTH LIVING

"There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root."
--Henry David Thoreau, Walden

We live in a world which is deeply unsatisfying for most people, a world in which many of our most basic needs--for love, peace, freedom, security, and meaning in life--are not being met. Most of us face constant worry about economic survival, loneliness and isolation, or fear of it, and a constant feeling that there's never enough of anything good to go around, be it love, sex or money.

As well, for many--probably most--people, there's a constant fear of violence. And for even more, there's a feeling of powerlessness. The end result is hopelessness, apathy, and often bitterness, meanness, and, all too often, outright sadism.

Why do these conditions exist? There's no grand conspiracy, but there are a number of reasons for this lousy situation, and it's important to understand what we're dealing with if we're going to change it.

PREFACE

For the last quarter-century, the American left has been in disarray. The (unfounded) optimism of the 1960s has given way to the pessimism of the '70s, '80s and '90s. As we near the year 2000, the left simply doesn't exist on the national level except as a myriad of single-interest groups-- pro-choice, environmental, animal rights, and gay rights groups being the most prominent. To put it another way, since the 1960s the focus of the left has narrowed. In the '60s there was, at least in some quarters, a feeling (however delusional) that real, major change--a social revolution -- was possible, indeed inevitable; and many activists of the time had hope in their hearts and revolution as their goal. In contrast, most activists today have no hope for major change (at least any time soon), and the single-issue battles they're fighting are almost exclusively defensive battles, which seem very unlikely to foster broad social change. As well, because their struggles seem, ultimately, so hopeless, single-interest groups are plagued by burnout and membership turnover. The end result is that corporate capitalism reigns triumphant, and what little opposition to it that exists is weak and divided.

How did this come to pass? And what can we do about it? Answering these questions is the purpose of this pamphlet. Because we're in such a disorganized state, I do not consider grand schemes for the reorganization of society; instead, I look at principles, practices, and projects that can help the left rejuvenate itself, and that can, I believe, lead to real social change, if widely adopted. (Those interested in blueprints for a future social/economic order should look at the valuable works of Murray Bookchin, Cornelius Castoriadis, Michael Albert, and Tom Greco.)

In order to bring about meaningful change, it's first necessary to understand the society in which we live. So, I begin by looking at the social and economic conditions that induce fear, loneliness, violence, and economic insecurity. I then examine the conditioning processes and agents that produce the masses of people who accept such conditions with hardly a whimper. Those that I examine include sexual repression, the patriarchal family, the education system, organized religion, and the mass media.

Continuing from there, I take a brief look at the two major revolutionary ideologies of the past century, anarchism and marxism; and I analyze the very different reasons why both have failed. I then look at some of the self-generated problems that have rendered the American left so impotent. And, finally, I suggest a number of principles, procedures and projects that, if widely adopted, could lead to a resurgence of the left and, eventually, to social r/evolution--a juster, freer, happier world.

These suggestions are not a call to self-sacrifice. Rather, they recognize that means determine ends, and that making oneself miserable is not a good way to eliminate social misery. Thus, my suggestions are designed as much to help social activists lead happier, more productive lives in the here and now as they are to transform society in the long run.

--Chaz Bufe, March 21, 1998

INSECURITY AND PERCEIVED SCARCITY

The economic situation is a major reason for our present societal difficulties. At present, most people in this country own almost nothing. The top 1% of the population own more than the bottom 90% of the population combined. The top 1% own 40% of the nation's wealth and the next 9% own another 30%, which means that the top 10% own 70% of the nation's wealth; that leaves another 30% of the wealth for the remaining 90% of us, with most of that distributed toward the top end. So, the bottom 50% of the population own nearly nothing--maybe a car and, if we're lucky, a heavily mortgaged house. It's also worth noting that there has been a distinct trend over the last 20 years or so toward a redistribution of wealth toward the upper end of the scale. In other words, since around the time Reagan was elected president, the rich have been getting richer and the poor have been getting poorer; and this trend is continuing under Clinton.

At the same time--notwithstanding the recent small increases--real wages have declined roughly 15% since the mid 1970s. The end result is that people are having to work harder and longer to make ends meet. To top things off, the era of job security is long gone. Instead, we live in the era of corporate takeovers, "downsizing," and "restructuring," and in which our job skills seemingly become obsolete every few years.

All of this leads directly to feelings of loneliness, insecurity, and scarcity. Most of us are so preoccupied with paying the rent or mortgage and with keeping our families fed that we have little time for social contacts and, since we're in such a hard space, naturally assume that we live in a world of scarcity. Another result is that because of very

real economic insecurity, artificial scarcity, and feelings of personal powerlessness, a great many of us spend our entire lives working at jobs we barely tolerate, if not outright hate. To put it another way, we're stuck on the bottom rungs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and never move up the ladder to satisfy our creative needs and the need for self-actualization.

THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE

Compounding the economic insecurities most of us face is the problem of physical danger, and the fear of it. Many of the reasons for violence can be traced to economic inequalities, but even more basic is the common belief in violence and coercion as means to an end. This belief is so pervasive that we're often not even aware of it. Perhaps the most important example of this is government. Belief in the necessity of coercion is the foundation of government. Belief in the necessity of coercive organization, that is, government, springs from the belief that people are incapable of voluntary cooperation, and that the only way to get them to behave in a civilized manner is to force them to do so--at the point of a gun if necessary. This leads to things such as extortion (that is, taxation) and military conscription. Ultimately, it all boils down to the belief that it's OK to push people around if you're powerful enough to do it.

This belief is, of course, reflected in daily life. All too many of us consider violence a means to get what we want, be it money, possessions, or dominance. There are millions of petty criminals who use violence--muggings, armed robberies, and carjackings--to get what they want. And there are literally millions of other thugs who intimidate, beat and rape those weaker than themselves--often, their wives and children--in order to (temporarily) feel the power and dominance that they crave. What makes this even more destructive than it is in and of itself is that children see this type of behavior modeled by their parents and other adults, and then imitate it when they're adults, at which point their children see it modeled, and later imitate it, continuing the chain through generation after generation. The end result is that we live in a culture of violence, in which many, many

people live with violence on a day-to-day basis, and in which almost everyone stands at least some risk of being violently assaulted.

Compounding all of this, psychologically, is the constant portrayal (and often glamorization) of violence in the media. The end result is that even those of us at low risk of becoming victims are often at least unconsciously preoccupied by the possibility of it, and almost no one can see any solution to violence except more violence, usually in institutional form--more cops, more prisons, more sadistic sentencing, and more barbaric prison conditions. That these things do nothing to eliminate the roots of violence is hardly surprising.

What makes things even worse is that most people not only see violence as the solution to violence, but that they think they have the right to use violence and coercion to force other people to be "moral." This belief comes squarely from the "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots" of patriarchal religions such as christianity and islam, both of which have long and bloody histories of murdering and torturing nonbelievers, nonconformists, and heretics. So, it's no surprise that those who adhere to such religions have no hesitation in using violence to force others to submit, or simply use it for the sheer joy of inflicting pain. A couple of quotes from the bible illustrate the religious submit-or-die attitude:

But these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. --Luke 19:27:

And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death. --Leviticus 24:16

The ironic thing about all this is that many of the religious folk most intent upon using violence and coercion to enforce "morality" are themselves quite fearful of becoming victims of violence. Yet the cruel policies they support produce violence.

A good example of this association of violence with "morality" is the war on drugs. It's painfully obvious that drug prohibition is not only destroying our civil liberties, but is also producing a lot of violence and property crime because of the combination of illegality and high profit margins; this results in turf wars by dealers, and crimes

committed by drug addicts to support the high price of their habits. All of this should be, and is, obvious, but there is so much fear, authoritarianism and sadism in the general population, and so little ability to analyze data, that the war on drugs continues. And we all pay the price for it through destruction of our liberties, sky-high taxes, and the creation of what could well become a police state.

This, however, should be no surprise, given that another effect of patriarchal religions is the degradation of human reason. One of the primary messages of patriarchal religions seems to be, "You have a brain, but don't use it. Believe, don't think." Two of the most famous manifestations of this attitude are the Catholic Index of Prohibited Books, which was in force for hundreds of years, and the contract that Iran's fundamentalist government put out on Salman Rushdie's life over a decade ago.

The following quote from Pope Gregory XVI's encyclical, Mirari Vox, provides a good example of the religious attitude toward the human intellect:

From the polluted fountain of indifferentism flows that absurd and erroneous doctrine, or rather, raving, which claims and defends liberty of conscience for everyone. From this comes, in a word, the worst plague of all, namely, unrestrained liberty of opinion and freedom of speech.

(This encyclical, incidentally, was written in relatively modern times, in the mid-19th century; Gregory XVI was pope from 1831 to 1846.)

An even more direct statement deriding human intellect comes from Martin Luther in his "Table Talk": "Reason is the greatest enemy that faith has."

This distrust and depreciation of human intelligence has influence far beyond the religious sphere. It results in a general inability to think critically, in contempt for logic and reason, and in the widespread holding of absurd beliefs that can't stand up to a moment's critical examination. In the United States, the most christian country in the western world, this is especially pronounced. In regard to even slightly complex questions, most people in this country are simply incapable of applying logical processes to observed facts in order to arrive at the most probably correct conclusions. Worse, they don't even care that they can't do this, and often have contempt for those who can. Many people actually believe that their own wishful thinking and uninformed opinions are every bit as valid as scientific theories formulated after years of careful study and testing. (Probably the most blatant current example of this tendency is the equation of religious dogma with scientific theory in so-called scientific creationism, which presents biblical myths as "science.") The end result of all this is that we have a population which is not only frustrated, fearful and mean, but that doesn't think very well.

Put another way, our society faces a grave spiritual crisis: most people feel so alienated, hopeless, and out of control, that they've abandoned (if they ever pursued) intellectual honesty and the search for truth, and instead blindly grab at any concepts and any movements, no matter how absurd, that seem to offer an easy way out of (or even a glimmer of hope in) what they perceive as a hopeless situation. Cults such as Heaven's Gate and the People's Temple are only the most obvious manifestation of this desperate longing for certainty in an uncertain world. Astrology, fundamentalist christianity, and narcissistic, you-create-your-own-reality belief systems are less dramatic, but equally real,

manifestations of this desperate, facts-be-damned longing for certainty. What all of these things have in common is that while they can't stand up to a moment's critical scrutiny, they provide easy answers. To some extent they relieve their believers of the "burden" of being critically minded adults; and many of them almost entirely relieve their believers of that "burden." What makes many providers of easy answers, especially fundamentalist religions, truly dangerous is that they not only appeal to the most intellectually craven parts of the human psyche, but that they organize their believers into herds intent on imposing their beliefs on others.

(Even though they may appear very dissimilar to the irrational beliefs of those searching for certainty, other absurd common beliefs, such as those in alien abductions and widespread satanic ritual abuse, serve a similar function. Although many believers in alien abductions and satanic ritual abuse cast themselves as victims, their beliefs, like those of new-age narcissists, provide them comfort--their beliefs supply a handy excuse for personal insecurity, neuroses, and lack of accomplishment in life. Like other irrational beliefs, these particular beliefs provide their holders with a means of escaping the "burden" of being responsible, critically minded adults.)

Of course, there are other factors involved in producing current social reality, and we'll get to them shortly. But patriarchal religions and the degradation of human reason have played a larger role than is commonly recognized.

PATRIARCHAL RELIGIONS AND COMPETITION-BASED ECONOMICS

At the dawn of the modern state, patriarchal religion combined with competition-based economics to produce some truly toxic effects. Put briefly, these effects were the degradation and sexual enslavement of women, and the creation of the patriarchal family.

The available evidence indicates that relations between the sexes in human societies tended to be relatively egalitarian during prehistoric (hunting and gathering) times. But that all changed about 8,000 years ago when human beings began to practice agriculture (large-scale food production). That made it possible, for the first time in human history, for people to create and to accumulate surplus goods on a relatively large scale. There's fairly convincing evidence that almost as soon as this happened inequalities arose (or at least greatly intensified) between the sexes, and that a ruling elite first appeared.

There are various theories to explain this sudden inequality. The one that makes the most sense to me is the theory that during prehistoric times woman's primary economic role was that of gatherer. Once man began to practice agriculture, the primary economic role of woman disappeared, and with it the basis for her equality with man. With that, man began to call the shots.

Since one of the functions of a ruling class is to perpetuate itself--and because the early ruling classes consisted of royal families--female sexual exclusivity soon became mandatory. The ruler wanted to know that his children were, in fact, his. A similar thing happened in the lower classes with the advent of private property. Men who

accumulated even small amounts of wealth wanted to pass it on to their heirs. So, the patriarchal family was born.

(At this point it's probably good to mention that, largely because of this enslavement of women, a lot of people tend to romanticize pre-historic societies. This is a mistake. While there were undoubtedly a lot of good aspects to prehistoric societies, there were also a lot of bad ones. The most obvious is the early age of death. The average age of death in prehistoric societies, according to many forensic studies, ranged from about 25 to about 35. As well, women suffered greatly from preventable [in modern times] health problems; due almost certainly to the lack of safe, effective contraception, the life expectancy of women was several years shorter than that of men in prehistoric societies.)

Regardless of the positive and negative aspects of such societies, we know that early historic societies were rigidly hierarchical and authoritarian, and that women in them were degraded and sexually enslaved. Naturally, this inequality, degradation and enslavement needed justification, and patriarchal religions arose to provide it. Judeo-christianity is a good example. In many judeo-christian "holy" texts, women are treated as unclean, as property, as inferior to men, and, as such, subject to rule by men. Here are a few divinely inspired words on women:

How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? --Job 25:4

These [redeemed] are they which were not defiled with women. --Revelation 14:4

Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. --1 Corinthians 11:9

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church . . . --Ephesians 5:22

Thus, the contribution of patriarchal religion to our social situation includes not only contempt for the human intellect, an authoritarian, thou-shalt-not "morality," and the embracement of violence as a means to enforce that "morality," but also (along with competition-based economics) the subjection and degradation of women. The contributions of patriarchal religion and competition-based economics hardly end there, though.

SOCIAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

We've seen that female sexual enslavement and the rise of monogamy (at least for women) arose with the advent of agriculture and private property, and that the justification for this was provided by religion. Just as important, however, was the concurrent advent of the patriarchal family--also sanctioned by religion.

While the form of the patriarchal family has changed over the ages--from large extended families (of married adult brothers, ranked by age) to isolated, nuclear families--it has retained its most important feature: male domination and female subservience. And it has retained its role as a bulwark in maintaining an authoritarian, hierarchical social order.

Only over the last century or so has anyone made a serious study of the role of the patriarchal family in society. Probably its most acute observer was Wilhelm Reich, a prominent psychologist and political radical who fled Germany upon Hitler's rise to power. Here, in a nutshell, is Reich's view of the function of the patriarchal family:

> Its cardinal function, that for which it is mostly supported and defended by conservative science and law, is that of serving as a factory for authoritarian ideologies and conservative structures. It forms the educational apparatus through which practically every individual of our society, from the moment of drawing his first breath, must pass.

Reich posited that the obedience and deference to parents inculcated in children in the patriarchal family is transferred in their adulthood to other authority figures--bosses, politicians, and, in a more general sense, to the entire governmental and economic apparatus. It seems equally likely that the social identification with the family developed in childhood is later transferred to other social entities, such as employers and the state. We're all familiar with workers who fiercely identify with their employers, even when their employers are paying them lousy wages or are causing great and obvious social harm--for example, through clear-cutting forests or by producing land mines. We're equally familiar with the multitudes who, especially in time of war, blindly identify themselves with "their" governments, who ardently support suppression of dissent and destruction of civil liberties, and whose most fervent desire seems to be submersion in the "patriotic" herd.

As is obvious, such misguided loyalty is seldom returned in kind. Employers usually think nothing of abandoning sick or injured employees, and mass firings--to use the current euphemism, "downsizings" --are simply business as usual. Most governments do little to reward their partisans either, as the often-shabby treatment of veterans demonstrates; and the powers ceded to government by "patriots" are often turned against them when the "patriots" cease to serve the government's needs. Clearly, rational thought plays equally little part in obedience/deference to authority figures and in identification of the self with external entities.

But what replaces rational thought in modern society? Reich's answer is that powerful, largely unconscious psychological forces are at work, and that the source of

these psychological forces lies in sexual repression. Maurice Brinton, a modern interpreter of Reich, paints an entertaining portrait of the repressive conditioning process:

Rigid and obsessional parents start by imposing rigid feeding times on the newborn. They then seek to impose regular potting habits on infants scarcely capable of maintaining the sitting posture. They are obsessed by food, bowels, and the 'inculcating of good habits.' A little later they will start scolding and punishing their masturbating five year old . . . They are horrified at their discovery of sexual exhibitionism between consenting juniors in private. Later still, they will warn their 12-year-old boys of the dire danger of 'real masturbation.' They will watch the clock to see at what time their 15-year-old daughters get home, or search their sons' pockets for contraceptives. For most parents, the child-rearing years are one long anti-sexual saga.

--THE IRRATIONAL IN POLITICS

According to Reich and Brinton, most children--who originally, innocently engaged in normal childhood sexual exploration--rebel against this anti-sexual crusade by masturbating or engaging in other sexual "misbehavior." They are then repeatedly punished until they submerge their sexual feelings (or at least actions). But the submerged feelings (and resentments) don't go away; instead, they resurface in nonsexual forms of rebellion, which are again punished. So, sexual feelings and rebellion--in all forms--become associated with punishment, and thus associated with fear. To survive, children become compliant; often, children become so afraid of their sexual feelings, and

indeed of revolt in any form, that punishment becomes no longer necessary in producing obedience. Another form of adaptation is overcompensation. To win parental favor, children become servile and, especially when their families are members of anti-sexual religions, puritanical. They identify themselves strongly with their families, with their (subservient) place in their families, and with their families' prudish, authoritarian belief systems.

But this adaptation is far from stable, because the children's new behaviors and beliefs are fundamentally in conflict with their deeper, suppressed desires for individual and sexual expression. And the longer the suppressive adaptations continue, the greater the tension in the individual. For this reason, sexually repressed individuals are almost always hypersensitive to the sexual behaviors and sexual expressions of others, because these expressions and behaviors arouse anxiety; they threaten to arouse deeply suppressed sexual longings fundamentally at odds with expressed beliefs. So, the sexually repressed are often noticeably rigid, and are always at the forefront of "moral" crusades for censorship and for suppression of individual sexual freedom.

But, in addition to producing fear of rebellion, fear of sexuality, obedience, servility, abandonment of self, identification with external entities, and repressive, authoritarian behavior, sexual repression has another unfortunate effect as well: a blunting of reason and intelligence. In Brinton's words, "it produces, by inhibiting sexual curiosity and sexual thinking in the child, a general inhibition of thinking and of critical faculties."

He sums up: "In brief, the goal of sexual repression is that of producing an individual who is adjusted to the

authoritarian order and who will submit to it in spite of all misery and degradation . . . [The individual] has developed a whole system of reactions, repressions, thoughts, rationalizations, which form a character structure adapted to the authoritarian social system."

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

This type of familial repression and conditioning is pervasive. It affects nearly everyone to a greater or lesser extent. To make matters even worse, it's reinforced by other, albeit less powerful, forms of authoritarian conditioning in the religious, educational, and mass media spheres. Familial repression ties in neatly with anti-sexual patriarchal religions, whose "thou shalts," "thou shalt nots," believe-don't-question teachings, and hierarchical, authoritarian structures reward their sexually repressed followers with feelings of superiority over their "animalistic" fellow humans. Members of such religions feel several rungs up on the rest of us morally, and thus feel no compunction--indeed, they often feel pleasure--when attempting to impose their repressive beliefs on those they consider beneath them.

The educational system is also an important authoritarian conditioning agent. In primary and secondary education, children are subjected to a type of Pavlovian conditioning utilizing bells and buzzers, interspersed with domination and submission rituals. They are quickly forced to become aware of their "natural" place in the administrator-teacher-student pecking order, and to accept it unquestioningly. All of this serves as a powerful reinforcement to the sexually repressive, authoritarian conditioning that they receive at

home and at church, and it helps to prepare them for "normal" roles in adult life.

To a great extent higher education retains the authoritarian structure of primary and secondary education, the seeming purpose of which is to habituate children to life in a hierarchical, authoritarian society. It is true that some academic disciplines, especially the fine arts and sciences, often encourage students to express themselves, to think for themselves, and to develop questioning attitudes. (It's no accident that the leading dissidents in the former Soviet Union were in the arts and hard sciences.) But in most other academic disciplines, for example, business administration and engineering, the emphasis is purely on learning utilitarian skills useful in making money. As well, higher education retains the hierarchical administrator-teacher-student pecking order, and there is, if anything, an even greater emphasis on grades (that is, competition among students) than there is in primary and secondary education. So, despite some mitigating factors, the overall role of higher education is to reinforce the authoritarian lessons learned in grade school and high school.

The third important conditioning agent is the mass media. In addition to presenting violence and coercion as acceptable, desirable, or even the only means of solving problems (as on TV cop shows), the media reinforces authoritarian structures in a more subtle way: it routinely presents such structures as not only being normal, but as being inevitable. Even at the height of the Cold War, when power-grubbing sociopaths in Washington and Moscow stockpiled enough nuclear weapons to turn the Earth into a burned out cinder--and came within an eyelash of doing so in 1962--one never found even the faintest suggestion that there was any way to organize social life other than through

coercive, hierarchical structures controlled by power-mad politicians holding the power of life and death over the rest of us. In part because of the media, most people won't even consider the possibility that there are alternatives to domination, submission, hierarchy, and coercion.

SOME FAILED ATTEMPTS AT CHANGE

At present, we're faced with what we've been faced with ever since the dawn of what passes for civilization: an authoritarian, hierarchical society in which women are oppressed, in which sexuality is repressed, in which it's dangerous to have unorthodox ideas or to engage in unorthodox behaviors, in which there's a gross maldistribution of wealth and income, in which a small elite controls all of the major institutions--and in which most people see all of this as normal.

Over the last hundred years, there have been many attempts to create a new society through political means. Some have partially succeeded, some have been ineffectual, and some, almost unbelievably, have made things worse--in some cases, far worse.

MARXISM & LENINISM

The most important of these attempts at change has been marxism, more specifically, leninism and its variants. While some portions of the marxist analysis of capitalist economics are valid, the political approach of leninism has been so hideously and obviously wrong that it merits little discussion. Suffice it to say that the many leninist attempts to build free, peaceful, egalitarian societies through the systematic use of coercion, violence, and terror by small elites have not been huge successes. The contradictions between means and ends doomed the leninist project to failure--but not, unfortunately, before leninism doomed tens of millions to prison, concentration camps, and death. (It's also worth noting that almost all leninist societies have been pronouncedly sexually repressive.)

Nonleninist marxist approaches haven't been very successful either. The most important of these, social democracy--in which "socialist" political parties take over government through democratic elections--has fallen far short of its followers' expectations. It's largely delivered more of the same-old-same-old, sugar coated with a few mild reforms.

ANARCHISM

The other major revolutionary ideology of the last century has been anarchism. Many of anarchism's ideas should be fundamental to any new culture. These include the concepts of mutual aid, noncoerciveness, voluntary cooperation rather than competition, nonhierarchical organization, decentralization, and individual freedom coupled with individual responsibility. Still, anarchism has not succeeded and has, rather, remained a marginal, misunderstood, largely ineffectual ideology. Given the attractiveness of many anarchist concepts, why is this so?

Neglecting the baleful influence of irresponsible, mean-spirited, anti-organizational, and just plain crazy "anarchists" (a problem I dealt with in Listen Anarchist!, and which Murray Bookchin has dealt with more recently and at greater length in Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism), the most likely explanation is that anarchism has failed because it addressed, and for the most part continues to address, only political and economic (that is, external)issues. It ignores the psychological factor, and so is, by and large, ineffective. Anarchists seem unaware that the people they address are, for the most part, lonely, insecure, and have a scarcity mentality which makes them afraid of each other. Anarchists appeal to reason and ignore

the fact that most people never learned to think very well in the first place. And they ignore the fact that most people are sexually repressed and fearful, and that as a result have poor self-images, crave "strong leaders," and feel at home in rigid hierarchies based on domination and submission. In short, anarchism has failed because it has relied on education and intellectual persuasion, an approach that deals with external social realities. As long as it continues to do so, it will continue to fail. To put it another way, anarchism has failed because it expects people to act as responsible, rational, self-directed adults without giving them a means of getting from here to there. (This isn't to say that the educational approach is useless--far from it; rather, it's to say that up till now the educational approach has been fragmentary and is not sufficient in itself to produce fundamental change.)

A cogent explanation of the failure of the purely rational, educational approach to social change is contained in Michel Cattier's biography of Wilhelm Reich, La Vie et l'Oeuvre du Docteur Wilhelm Reich:

It would be wrong to believe that working people fail to revolt because they lack information about the mechanisms of economic exploitation. In fact, revolutionary propaganda which seeks to explain to the masses the social injustice and irrationality of the economic system falls on deaf ears. Those who get up at five in the morning to work in a factory, and have on top of it to spend two hours of every day on underground or suburban trains, have to adapt to these conditions by eliminating from their minds anything that might put such conditions in question again. If they realized that they were wasting their lives in the service of an absurd system they would either go mad or commit suicide.

Maurice Brinton adds (in The Irrational in Politics), "They repress anything that might disturb them and acquire a character structure adapted to the conditions under which they must live. Hence it follows that the idealistic tactic consisting of explaining to people that they are oppressed is useless, as people have had to suppress the perception of oppression in order to live with it."

AVENUES TO CHANGE

Obviously, any approach that will produce fundamental social change must address psychological realities--and not in a purely theoretical, educational way. How is this to be done? How are we to produce a movement that will create real change? Here are a few avenues worthy of exploration:

First, a workable approach must take into account the individual's sexual longings and repressions. These are at the core of the average individual's identity and desires--and at the core of his or her authoritarian personality structures. It's almost certain that Wilhelm Reich was right when he said (in The Mass Psychology of Fascism) that, "The interest of the mass individual is not political, but sexual." So, any realistic movement toward real social change must address sexual issues.

Second, such an approach must be both theoretical and experiential. It must be theoretical if it's to be cohesive, and if those in it are to understand its goals, purposes, and to maintain their motivation--that is, to have a motivating higher vision. And it must be experiential if any real change is to occur in the psyches of those in it, and in those of the people they're trying to reach. Lacking such psychological change, the old authoritarian structures will continue to reproduce themselves no matter what the level of theoretical understanding.

Third, a successful movement for change must be self-sustaining. Probably the most desirable way to achieve this self-sustainability is that those in the movement derive enough benefits and support from participating in it, and understand its purposes well enough, that they remain

motivated and active. And the experiential aspects can provide the motivating benefits.

Fourth, in order to provide those benefits, any successful movement will need to provide its members considerably more pleasure than pain. One of the main reasons that the left is so dull is its emphasis on self-sacrifice to the exclusion of pleasure, and its use of guilt as a means of manipulation; many leftist groups are outright puritanical, and even the most enlightened usually treat pleasure as something frivolous, as something unworthy of attention. As a result, participation in most political groups is about as enjoyable as a visit to the dentist. The results of this are a high dropout rate and the continued participation of only the most self-sacrificing members--who, of course, feel justified in demanding (or at least expecting) similar self-sacrifice from everyone else, which contributes to the high dropout rate, and so on.

Historically, leftist groups have never recognized that people are, by and large, not altruistic. Instead, they're fearful, insecure and, above all, lonely; and most join political groups as much to meet their own social needs as they do to advance the causes of the groups. When their needs aren't met or, worse, are ridiculed, they leave in droves. What this means is that any successful movement for social change must pay considerable attention to the social and emotional spheres--it should provide forums in which its members can explore their desires and motivations, and it should also organize many primarily social events. Of course, this approach would be unworkable under extreme circumstances, as in Nazi-occupied Europe, but in relatively open (and anomistic) western societies, it makes eminent good sense.

Fifth, a workable movement for change must have clearly delineated positive goals. One of the primary reasons for the failure of the left in the United States is that it never put forth a positive, clearly outlined vision of a better society; and, given the lack of a clear vision, it has done very little to create positive alternatives. Instead, the left has concentrated on campaigns against the various excesses of capitalism--against the Viet Nam war; against nuclear power; against racial and sexual discrimination; against environmental despoliation; etc., etc., etc.

When the left has outlined positive alternatives, they've been fragmentary and unconnected (as with the solar power and the pro-choice movements). Worse, at times the left's vision has been so myopic that it's promoted destructive programs (for example, so-called affirmative action) that implicitly accept the concept of a scarcity economy and that are seemingly designed to put the working class at war with itself. (Affirmative action is an approach made in heaven for the ruling class. It produces no fundamental social change. It hides the economic nature of exploitation under a racial veneer. And it takes the price of the small improvements it produces out of the hide of the white working class--thus setting workers of different races at each other's throats.) Given this lack of a holistic positive vision, it's little wonder that the left is dispirited and disorganized. This situation will change only when we outline a comprehensive, positive vision based on daily life, a vision that will address the real needs and desires of the average person.

Sixth, any meaningful movement toward social change must have a utilitarian side. It must have actual, ongoing projects not related to its own maintenance in which members can actively participate. One of the primary

reasons that the American left has been so dead for so many years is that leftist organizations almost invariably have been fixated upon themselves. The primary goal of a good many--especially political parties --has seemingly been merely to sign up new members and to "build the organization," which largely accounts for why leftist groups and meetings are almost always deadly dull. Other leftist groups are organized so that a small staff does all of the real work (if any), while the inactive "members" are looked upon merely as cash cows. Both approaches are recipes for lifeless, do-little organizations.

Other groups, especially antinuclear groups, have sporadic projects, come to life during the projects, and then fall apart as soon as they're over. The Livermore Action Group (LAG) in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1980s is a good example. LAG had no ongoing projects, but rather lurched from one nonviolent direct action to another (against the Lawrence Livermore Lab--a nuclear weapons development facility). During the time leading up to the action, LAG came alive; but as soon as the action was over, all energy drained from the group. There are lessons to be drawn from this.

It certainly appears that having some kind of outward-focused, ongoing project--especially one related to the group's aims--is vital to any political group. There are many possibilities. Projects that I'm aware of that have helped to cement groups include bookstores, cafes, coffee houses, bars, lecture series, meeting/lecture/dance halls, pirate radio stations, and publishing projects. Food Not Bombs, which is organized around delivering food to the hungry and homeless (while exposing the reasons that there are so many hungry and homeless), is an excellent example of a political group with a solid utilitarian side.

Seventh, and importantly, means determine ends. The methods and organization of a movement toward real change must mirror its goals. This means, among other things, the embracement of voluntary cooperation and noncoerciveness; nonhierarchical organization; decentralization (that is, local autonomy); and spontaneous leadership.

VOLUNTARY COOPERATION / NONCOERCIVENESS

Voluntary cooperation is an important principle. At present, our most important social institutions--government, business, and religion--are all organized around a diametrically opposed principle: coercion. All of these institutions rely upon coercion to achieve their ends. Government does this directly through the threat (and often the use) of armed force. Business relies on governmental coercion to maintain an inequitable social system in which it can flourish; it often battens off contracts funded by the monies that the government extorts from the public (through taxation); and it often influences the government to give it unfair advantages, either through subsidies or through artificial limitation of competition. As for religion, when they've had the power to do so, patriarchal religions such as christianity and islam have invariably used coercion to enforce their "moral" dictates. In the West, the declining power of the christian churches has forced them over the past 200 or 300 years to rely upon government to do their coercive dirty work. In recent years, however, religious zealots have again taken to direct use of violence and coercion to achieve their ends. This is most noticeable in the activities of the so-called right to life movement, which

has employed physical harassment, arson, bombings, and murder to achieve its ends.

The end result of all of this institutionalized violence and coercion is a seemingly endless cycle of authoritarian attempts to control others, with attendant resistance, followed by further increases in the use of violence and coercion by the controllers. The truly sad thing about all this is that those who are the victims of violence and coercion often see no other way to resist but through their own use of violence and coercion (either directly or via the government)--and so the cycle continues, generation after generation.

Given that means determine ends, it's essential to abandon coercion if a peaceful, free, and nonviolent society is the goal. This means that any movement for fundamental change cannot rely on violence and coercion (governmental or direct) to achieve its ends. It must, instead, rely upon persuasion, education, and psychological understanding, and must also provide models of voluntary cooperation for others to emulate.

The ZEGG intentional community in Germany provides a good example of the voluntary approach. One of the primary reasons that participation in social change groups is so stultifying is that most such groups--if they do anything other than meet--sponsor group projects in which all members are expected to participate. The result is that members often participate in projects in which they have little if any interest; so, many of them become resentful and drop away from the projects and groups. Another result is that such group projects, and the groups sponsoring them, very often lack dynamism and end up mired in internal power struggles and squabbling (with the different factions

wanting everyone to work on their projects). ZEGG has avoided this trap. ZEGG largely functions as an umbrella organization in which individual and small group projects arise. At ZEGG, individuals and small groups originate projects, and only those who feel drawn to the projects participate in them. This avoids the group-projects trap.

NONHIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

In addition to relying on coercion, all of our major social institutions are also hierarchically organized. The destructive effects of such an organizational structure are manifold. The first and most obvious is that it results in a lot of stupid decisions, with a lot of resultant harm and waste. The most important reason for this is that those at the top, the decision makers, cannot have a full grasp of the facts when they make decisions. To give an example, let's take a large corporation with 100,000 employees. Let's say that this corporation has a small research branch employing 100 people working on one particular problem. Who will be better informed about possible solutions to the problem--the 100 people working on it, or the 10 people on the corporation's board of directors who receive their boiled-down information through a chain of command? Complicating matters is the tendency of those in positions of command to blame the messenger when bad news arrives. This often--one is tempted to say always--results in those in subordinate positions hiding anything negative, and thus those at the top often receive very skewed information. It's little wonder that hierarchies are plagued with inefficiencies and that those at the top so often make bad decisions.

There are also harmful psychological aspects to hierarchical organization. The most obvious are the development of abusive personalities among bosses and festering resentments among their subordinates. Even when bosses are relatively decent individuals, it's very difficult for real friendship to develop between them and those below (and above) them. In such situations, the boss always has to be sensitive to the possibility that he'll be perceived as abusing his power, as pushing his subordinate around, and the subordinate always lives with the fear that should he say or do anything to displease his boss, the boss will retaliate. To put it another way, hierarchical structure results in social insularity; it makes it nearly impossible for those with different amounts of status and power --that is, those on different levels of the hierarchy--to relate genuinely to each other.

To get away from the stupid decision making, waste, lack of genuineness, and social isolation engendered by hierarchy, nonhierarchical, decentralized organization is necessary. In a social change group, this implies several things: 1) that organization be kept to the minimum necessary; 2) that all members have an equal say in decisions affecting the group as a whole; 3) that local groups be autonomous--that is, that they be independent groups bound only by common ideals, that they be unbeholden to any central authority, and that the individuals in the independent groups voluntarily cooperate on common projects, with only those who feel called to do so taking part.

A familiar example of this type of nonhierarchical, decentralized organization is the religious group, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), which despite its destructive social effects and its pronounced cult-like characteristics is

a model of anarchist organization. Anyone interested in decentralized, nonhierarchical organization would do well to study AA's organizational structure and its organizational principles. On a mass, industrial scale, the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists demonstrated the practicality of this type of organization during the Spanish Civil War. Those interested in this organizational model would also do well to study the many books available on the constructive work of the Spanish anarchists.

SPONTANEOUS LEADERSHIP

Spontaneous leadership is also important. Rather than adopt the old model of a fixed leadership in a hierarchy telling everyone else what to do, social change groups would do well to adopt a new model of spontaneous leadership in a horizontal, that is decentralized, organization.

In the '60s and '70s many leftist and feminist groups agonized over how to eliminate leadership, equating all leadership (including temporary, task-based leadership) with authoritarian leadership. Their fruitless efforts confirm what the more astute anarchists have been saying for over a century--that it's a mistake to think that any kind of group or organization can exist without leadership; the question is, what kind of leadership is it going to be? The old model insists that a static leadership direct everything, regardless of the interest, motivation, or expertise of the leaders, and that others follow the orders of these leaders, no matter how stupid. In the new model, those who have the most expertise, the most interest, and the most commitment provide the leadership. The key here is that they derive their authority not through coercion, but precisely through their interest, expertise, and commitment; as well, only those

who feel attracted to their projects will (temporarily) follow them --and, ideally, these temporary followers will, at one time or another, be leaders of other projects. Another key element is that, in this new model, leadership is permeable--anyone who has sufficient motivation and commitment will likely become part of the multifaceted, de facto, and ever-changing leadership within a nonhierarchical organization.

To coordinate activities, nonhierarchical organizations often create service positions, with those entrusted with the positions taking on certain routine administrative and secretarial functions. To help ensure that such positions do not metamorphose into power positions in a hierarchy, nonhierarchical groups normally install the safeguards of mandatory rotation of offices and immediate recallability. That is, any individual can only serve a limited term and then must exit any given position, and the group as a whole can dismiss office holders at any time should they abuse their positions.

SEXUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

Finally, any political movement that hopes to fundamentally restructure social life must openly address sexual issues (and the psychological issues they give rise to). Not only are such issues at the bottom of the average person's identity and desires, but failure to address them cripples political movements. Obviously the degree to which groups need to address sexual and psychological matters varies with the aims of the groups and with how tightly they're organized. But even in the loosest groups with the most limited aims, it's harmful to ignore sexual and emotional issues when they arise, because when ignored these matters can create a tense, poisonous atmosphere. In

tightly knit groups with ambitious aims, such as intentional communities, it's a dreadful mistake not to address sexual issues and the personal tensions they give rise to. The ZEGG political project/intentional community in Germany provides a good example of a tightly knit group that successfully addresses sexual and psychological questions.

Perhaps the primary reason that ZEGG has succeeded to the extent that it has is that, almost uniquely among such projects and communities, ZEGG has treated sexual matters openly--making them "transparent." Individual freedom and individual choice are honored at ZEGG, but when potentially disruptive sexual issues and tensions arise (for example, jealousy), these matters are openly, and sometimes publicly, addressed, and the individuals involved are helped, if they so desire, to work through their emotions.

In virtually all other political groups and intentional communities, sexual questions are ignored, or even considered a "distraction" from the "serious" purposes of the group or community. (This is a telling indication of the puritanical, anti-pleasure bias of all too many leftist groups and intentional communities.) Because sexual issues will inevitably arise in any human project, failure to deal with them ensures that when sexual tensions arise they'll leak out in all sorts of destructive, often indirect ways. One would hope that other social change groups will learn this lesson quickly, will begin to recognize the importance of sexual issues (and the psychological issues they give rise to), and will begin to address them openly.

Any successful movement toward real change will provide models to be emulated, based on the above-listed principles. If this decentralized, noncoercive approach is to succeed, clearly the only way it will succeed is if it's voluntarily adopted by people the world over. You can't achieve a noncoercive society through the use of coercion. Thus, one of the tasks of any movement toward real change is to provide models attractive enough that others will want to adopt them.

There are several advantages to this approach. First, it actually has a good chance of succeeding--eventually. Second, it should help those taking part in it lead happier, more meaningful lives while the process of change occurs. And third, such a movement stands less chance of being attacked by the government than more overt political movements dedicated solely to making external changes through political means. The reason for this is that even though old-style political-change movements are not a real threat to the hierarchical, authoritarian structure of society, the government often perceives them as such.

So, the government attacks them with all the means at its disposal, including disinformation campaigns, frameups, infiltration, agents provocateur, and, occasionally, outright murder. A few famous instances that come to mind are the Haymarket frameup, the Sacco & Vanzetti case, COINTELPRO during the Viet Nam War, and the hundreds of FBI burglaries of CISPES offices during the 1980s. Thus, direct attempts to impose external political change not only don't produce fundamental structural change, but

they can be dangerous to participate in. This makes a noncoercive, evolutionary approach all the more attractive.

Abandoning old-fashioned political movements that cannot produce fundamental change is no sign of cowardice. (One could just as easily argue that avoiding pointless physical danger, as in skydiving or mountain climbing, is "cowardice.") Rather, it's realism. It's recognizing that one has limited time and resources, and that investing them in confrontational campaigns (no matter how real the evils confronted) diverts one from the fundamental task of building better alternatives to the present social structure.

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

There is no one single way to change society. But, fortunately, there are many different, mutually reinforcing approaches, all incorporating the concepts of noncoerciveness, voluntary cooperation, nonhierarchical organization, decentralization, and spontaneous leadership, and all recognizing the psychological realities that make authoritarian, coercive "solutions" so attractive to so many people. Among the many possibilities are free schools aimed at educating children in noncoercive, nonhierarchical environments; educational efforts in the print and electronic media advocating anarchist concepts and, importantly, exposing the psychosexual roots of authoritarian attitudes and conditioning; theater, musical and artistic projects with the same aims; workplace (anarcho-syndicalist) groups with the aim of restructuring work life along nonhierarchical, decentralized lines; and model intentional communities aimed at putting all of these values into practice in daily life--at helping their members overcome their own authoritarian conditioning, at dealing openly with sexual issues, and at serving as launching pads for other projects aimed at social liberation.

At present, projects--albeit small ones--exist in the United States pursuing the first four of these five approaches (and others as well), but at present there is no project pursuing the fifth approach. One recent attempt to organize model communities called Network for a New Culture is all but dead for a number of reasons: 1) excessive emphasis on sexual liberation and intentional community in outreach materials; 2) incorporation of new-agey, "feminist" elements (basically sociobiology from a female-superior viewpoint) borrowed from Germany's ZEGG experiment; and 3) insufficient emphasis on the social, psychological and political goals of the project. The end result was that Network for a New Culture attracted very few people with social/political understanding and commitment. Instead, it attracted a large number of individuals (mostly men, of course) interested primarily, if not exclusively, in sex; a large number of new age types; and a large number of individuals attracted to intentional community for no other reason than that they saw it as an easy means of meeting their economic, social, and intimacy needs. It's small wonder that such people contributed little to the project, and that most of those doing the real work necessary to maintaining the Network burned out. Probably the best thing to be said for Network for a New Culture is that it provided a number of object lessons in what not to do.

The situation in Europe is somewhat better. There, the ZEGG experiment is made up largely of individuals with political understanding and political backgrounds (many from the student, feminist, and anti-nuclear movements). It's apparently prospering and spawning offshoots, despite its being burdened with a "feminist" sociobiological

ideology (that posits that attitudes and traits such as cooperativeness, noncompetitiveness and nurturance are inherently female, and that women, therefore, must lead the way for men),(1) a disturbing reverence for the project's founder (which, to his credit, he does not encourage), and a generally uncritical acceptance of the sometimes exotic, unsupported concepts of the group's leaders.

While there's a need for model communities presenting a positive alternative to authoritarian, sexually repressed, hierarchical society, none exist in the United States at present. The relatively few nonhierarchical communities that do exist are all small, and they mostly ignore the psychological and sexual questions at the root of authoritarian conditioning and personality structures. So their effectiveness is severely limited, and the need for positive alternatives still exists.

The essential elements of such positive alternatives would be a minimum of organization, a minimum of rules, direct democracy, noncoerciveness, voluntary cooperation, self-exploration, individual development, and a willingness to face sexual and psychological issues. The purpose of such communities would be not only to provide a supportive atmosphere in which members could discover who they are and what they want, but to serve as models for a new society.

The nearest thing that we have to such a community at present is the ZEGG experiment in Germany. While it's far from perfect (see above comments), ZEGG is an exciting place, filled with idealistic, mutually supportive people pursuing their passions, and which incorporates amny of the healthy, anti-authoritarian elements outlined above. One

can only hope that a similar experiment comes into being sometime soon in the North America.(2)

There's a clear need for one. It would be tremendously useful to have even a small-scale model that would demonstrate--at least to the extent possible given our larger social context--life in a free society. It's one thing to read descriptions of free societies; it's entirely something else to visit even a very imperfect model of such a society, as I did in Germany two years ago. I found that experience more motivating than all of the anarchist theoretical texts I've ever read. It's a very good bet that others would find a similar model here equally motivating.

MANY ROADS, ONE DESTINATION

There are many valid approaches to a free society--though I believe that any successful approach will incorporate the principles outlined above--and different approaches will appeal to different people. By following our individual inclinations, while adopting common principles, we can help to realize our common purpose--a free society.

In the end, the goal of our various projects must be to produce large numbers of self-directed, conscious, determined people who know what they want and will work to make it reality. When that happens, real change will occur in all areas of society. Authoritarian society cannot meet fundamental human needs (for meaning, love, peace, and freedom), and it's our task to help our fellow human beings to understand that, and to offer them positive alternatives.

NOTES:

1. At present, it's far from certain to what extent typically "male" and typically "female" traits are the result of biology, and to what extent they're the result of social conditioning. Even in areas where there do seem to be biological differences, as with males, on average, having better spatial perception than females, the average differences between individuals are not great. When one graphs such biological differences, one normally sees two bell curves (one for males, one for females) that almost entirely overlap, with major differences showing up only on the extreme high and low ends and involving relatively few individuals. Because of this overlap, it's nonsensical to argue, for instance, that women as a category should not became airline pilots because of their "lesser" spatial-perception abilities. It's equally nonsensical to argue that women must "lead the way" for men because of men's "lesser" ability to cooperate. It makes far more sense to simply insist upon, and to model, such forms and values as cooperation, noncompetitiveness, nurturance, and nonhierarchical organization in both sexes.
2. I'd like to hear from others with a desire to create such an experiment here in North America. Please contact me by e-mail or at the address at the start of this on-line pamphlet.

DESIGN YOUR OWN UTOPIA

CHAZ BUFE & DOCTRESS NEUTOPIA

Contact the authors
"http://www.seesharppress.com/seesharp@earthlink.net"

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INTRODUCTION

Why would anyone want to design a utopia? There are several reasons. The most important is that utopian thought is essential to social change. Without a vision of something better, something that inspires, the chance of social progress is low; and the clearer the vision, the better the chances of achieving it.

While the idea of overhauling society as a whole can be daunting, utopian thought does not have to be applied on a global scale to be of value. In fact, it often serves as the impetus for small experiments, which serve as models. These models can and sometimes do become the triggers for the adoption of ideas which, except for the models, would never have been adopted wholesale.

Given this, the importance of utopian thought in the present situation seems obvious. We're faced with massive ecological destruction (so massive that the survival of the human species might well be in doubt), overpopulation, a seemingly never-ending arms build-up, new, inadequately tested, and sometimes incredibly dangerous technologies, and murderous religious fanatics and amoral corporations utilizing many of these technologies. A way out is clearly needed, and utopian thought can point the way.

Simply considering the questions presented in this pamphlet can help us to understand that the present social, political, and economic systems are human inventions, and that we, collectively, have the power to change them. Beyond helping to produce this understanding, the purpose of this pamphlet is to help those using it to clarify their own ideas, values, desires, and relationship to others. Awareness precedes action, and the higher our level of awareness, the

higher our chances of achieving a humanistic reorganization of society.

NOTES: This questionnaire was designed to be of use to both those interested in small, intentional communities and those interested in broad, global transformation. A few of the questions below are specific to small communities, while a few others are specific to global utopias; the large majority of questions are applicable to both. Use your common sense in deciding which questions are applicable to your vision.

To avoid fatigue, we suggest that you only answer the questions in one or two sections at a time. We'd also suggest that if you're answering this questionnaire as an individual activity, you write out your answers rather than give them verbally or mentally in order to attain greater clarity. In a group-activity format it would probably be more useful to answer questions verbally.

As a final note, we should acknowledge that the inspiration for this pamphlet came from a utopia-design questionnaire written in the 1970s by Peyton Richter and Walter Fogg. We should further note that the questions in Richter's and Fogg's work bear very little resemblance to those in the present questionnaire.

DESIGN YOUR OWN UTOPIA

I. SCOPE

Would your utopia be a global utopia?
If not, would it be a nation state? A bioregion? A city? An eco-village or other type of intentional community? If none of the above, what?

II. GOALS & VALUES

1. What would be the fundamental values of your utopia?
2. What would be its goals?
3. Would individuals choose their own goals and values, or would their goals and values be those of your utopian ideology?

III. MEMBERS/CITIZENS

1. If your utopia was less than global, what would be the characteristics of its population?
2. Would it be open to all, or would you select its members?

A. If you'd select members, how and why would you do so?
B. What would be the criteria for membership?

3. If your utopia was small in size, would you find the physical site or the community members first?
Why?
4. What would be the rights of the members of your utopia?
5. What would be the duties of the members?
6. Would there be social stratification (e.g., owners and renters, different roles for males and females) in your utopia?
7. If there would be social stratification, what roles would different classes of individuals play?
Why?

IV. Children & Education

1. Would the number of children per parent be limited in your utopia?

A. If so, to how many children?

B. Why?

2. Would children live with their parents?

If not, what would be their living arrangements?

3. What rights would children have?

4. Would restrictions be placed on children's activities?

If so, what restrictions?

5. How would children be educated?

A. Who would be the educators?

B. What rights would children have in deciding what they learned?

6. Would your utopia feature sex education of children?

If so, who would conduct it?

7. Would the traditional higher education system be retained, modified, or discarded?

A. If modified, how?

B. If discarded, how would your utopia conduct higher education?

V. Power & Politics

1. Would your utopia be based on any particular political theory?

A. If so, what?

B. And why?

2. What form of social and political organization would your utopia have?

A. Would it be based on political authority, with some giving orders and others obeying them in a vertical, hierarchical structure, as at present?

B. Or would it be based on voluntary cooperation in a horizontal, noncoercive structure?

3. What would your decision-making process(es) be?
4. Would you have a constitution, other written agreement(s), or verbal agreements?
5. How would officials or coordinators be selected?
6. How would you deal with abuse of authority by officials or coordinators?

VI. Economics, Work, and Leisure

1. How would production and distribution be organized in your utopia?
2. Would your utopia retain the use of money?
If not, would there be a means of exchange?
a. If so, what?
3. How would work be compensated?
A. Would everyone receive equal compensation for hours worked?
B. Would those who do dangerous or unpleasant work receive extra compensation or work fewer hours than those doing pleasant work?
C. Would access to community goods and services be based solely on need or want, and not connected to work?
If so, given present social conditioning, how would you prevent parasitism?
4. How would people determine what jobs they do?
5. Who would do economic planning?
How—what would be the process?
6. Would your utopia have sustainable economics (that is, economic processes that do not deplete or destroy unrenewable natural resources)?
A. If so, how would your sustainable system differ from the current system?
B. If so, how would you transition from the current economic system to a sustainable system?
7. Would your utopia be based on private property? Common ownership?

Or a combination of the two?
If the latter, what would that combination be?
8. How many hours per day would your utopians work?
9. Would the standard of living in your utopia be poverty level (voluntary simplicity), middle class, or high on the hog?
10. Would you set aside time for play and creative pursuits?
How important would such time be in comparison with work time?

VII. Sex, Sex Roles, & Gender Differences

1. Would men and women live together in your utopia, or do you envision a sexually separatist utopia?
A. If so, why?
B. And how would you achieve it?
2. Would the roles of women and men vary in your utopia?
If so, how?
3. Would the nuclear family be retained?
If not, what would replace it?
4. Would marriage be retained?
A. If so, who would conduct the ceremonies?
B. Would married people have any rights or obligations beyond those of single people or those in alternative relationships?
C. Would gay marriages be recognized?
5. Would "alternative" relationships (gay/lesbian, bi, polyamorous, etc.) be prohibited, discouraged, tolerated, or encouraged?
If only some forms of relationships would be discouraged, tolerated, or encouraged, which ones would they be, and why?
6. Would your utopia encourage sexual freedom?
7. Would women and men be equally free sexually?
8. Would abortion be available on demand?
A. Would men have rights in making this decision?

B. If so, whose decision would be final?
C. If abortion was not available on demand, what criteria would be used in determining eligibility for abortion?
And who would make the final decision?
9. How would your utopia deal with sexually transmitted diseases?
10. What would be the attitude toward youthful sexual experimentation?
11. Would your utopia address problems of sexual jealousy and possessiveness when they arise?
A. If so, would it do so openly (publicly)?
Why would you choose to do this publicly?
B. Or would such problems be dealt with privately?
Why would you choose to do this privately?
C. In either case, what procedure(s) would be used?
12. Would your utopia ban, tolerate, or encouragepublic nudity?
A. If you'd ban it, why would you do so?
B. If your utopia would tolerate nudity, would it be acceptable in all places and at all times?
Why?
C. If nudity would not be acceptable in all places and at all times, what restrictions would you place on it?
Why?
D. If you'd encourage public nudity, why would you do so?
13. Would any kinds of sexual relations be banned in your utopia?
A. If so, what kinds?
B. Why?

VIII. Science & Technology

1. Would your utopia encourage scientific research?
A. If yes, would it be in all fields?
B. If not in all fields, in which fields would research be encouraged and in which would it be discouraged?

Why?

2. Would technological development be encouraged in all areas?

If not, which technologies would be encouraged and which discouraged?

Why?

3. Would your utopia abandon any technologies?

A. If so, which ones?

B. Why?

4. What would be the energy sources to drive your utopia?

Why would you use these particular energy sources?

5. Would any energy sources be banned?

A. If so, which ones?

B. Why?

6. What if any role would the new reproductive technologies have?

A. Who, if anyone, would have access to these technologies?

B. Would genetic manipulation be permitted in order to choose the sex of offspring?

C. Would genetic manipulation be permitted in order to choose other characteristics?

a. If so, which characteristics?

b. And why?

7. Would cloning be permitted in your utopia?

A. If so, who would be allowed to do it?

B. And for what purposes?

8. Would your utopia allow life-extension techniques?

A. If so, would you attempt to extend life indefinitely?

a. If so, why?

b. If not, why not?

B. If life extension techniques were available, who would have access to them?

9. Would your utopia explore outer space or confine itself to the Earth?

10. How would your utopia deal with the residues of present society, such as nuclear and toxic waste?

IX. RELIGION

1. Would there be a division between religion and other social and political institutions in your utopia?
A. If so, why?
B. If not, why not?
2. Would your utopia have a single religion?
A. If so, what would it be?
B. Why?
3. Would your utopia have no religion?
Why?
4. Would your utopia have many religions?
A. If so, would you place any restrictions on the types of religion?
B. Why?
C. How would you deal with religious strife?
5. How would you deal with cults and gurus?
6. Would your utopia have rituals and celebrations?
A. If so, what would they be?
7. Would there be religious ceremonies concerning birth, death, marriage, rites of passage, etc.?
8. Would religion be integrated into daily life?
If so, how?
9. What would be the relationship, if any, between sex and religion?
10. Would there be a religious hierarchy?
If so, how would religious leaders be selected?
11. What would be the relationship of religion to science?
12. Would psychoactive substances have any role in religion in your utopia?
A. If so, which substances?
B. What would be their role?

X. The Arts

1. What would bethe role of the arts in your utopia?
2. Would your utopia distinguish between art and life?
If so, how?
3. Would your utopia encourage participation in the arts?
A. If so, who would be encouraged?
B. And how?
4. Would you distinguish between "mere entertainment" and "serious art"?
A. If so, what would be the purpose of each?
B. How would you distinguish between them?
C. And who would make the distinction?
5. Would you make a distinction between amateur and professional artists?
A. If so, why?
B. What would be the ramifications of this distinction?
6. Would professional artists (musicians, dancers, et al.) pursue their creative efforts full time, with the rest of the community supporting them?
If so, who would determine who would receive public support?
7. Would there be any censorship of art in your utopia?
A. If so, what would be censored?
B. And who would do the censoring?

XI. The Media

1. What types of media would exist in your utopia?
2. Who would control the media?
3. Who would own the media?
4. Would there be any censorship of the media?
A. If so, what would be censored?
B. Why?
C. And who would do the censoring?
5. Would participation in the media be open to all?
A. If not, why not?

B. If so , how would this be achieved?

6. Would intellectual property be recognized in your utopia?

If so, how?

XII. The Physical

1. What would be the architecture of your utopia?

What materials and techniques would be used in building construction?

What would be the underlying philosophical or ecological reasons for the use of these materials and techniques?

2. Would your utopia have high population density or low population density?

Why?

3. Would your utopia be urban, rural, or have elements of both?

A. Why?

B. If both, what would their relationship be?

4. What kind(s) of transportation would it use?

5. Would any kinds of transportation be encouraged or discouraged?

A. If so, which ones?

B. How?

C. And why?

6. How would your utopia deal with sewage and other waste products?

7. What would be the relationship between public space and private space?

8. Would your utopia have private, self-contained dwellings (as at present—detached houses and self-contained apartments)?

9. Would it have private, but non-self-contained individual living spaces (without kitchens and laundry facilities, and perhaps without private bathrooms or living rooms)?

A. What kind of buildings would these living spaces be in?

10. Would your utopia have private or communal dining facilities, or a combination of the two?
If a combination, what would it be?
11. Would it have a closed or nearly closed ecosystem, as in Soleri's arcology?
12. How would your utopia deal with noise pollution?

XIII. FOOD

1. Would your utopia be vegetarian, omnivorous, or would food choice be an individual matter?
If your utopia was small scale and food choice was an individual matter, would you prohibit or allow the preparation and consumption of meat in public kitchens/dining areas?
2. Would agriculture be the province of factory farms, as at present, or would agricultural production be carried on by smaller units?
If by smaller units, what types of units?
Who would own and control the smaller units?
3. Would agriculture utilize pesticides and chemical fertilizers, or would agriculture be organic?

XIV. ANIMALS

1. Would animals be raised and slaughtered for food?
A. If so, what kinds of animals?
B. If so, would this production be under the present factory system?
If not, what system would replace it?
C. Would free-range production of food animals be allowed?
If so, of what animals?
2. Would hunting be allowed in your utopia?
If so, of what animals?
3. Would animals be used in laboratory testing?
If so, what would be the limits to this testing?

4. Would animals be kept as pets?
If so, what animals?
5. Would any animals be banned as pets?
If so, what animals?
Why?

XV. Health & Medicine

1. Would your utopia utilize allopathic (western) medicine?
2. Would it utilize alternative (holistic, herbal, natural, etc.) approaches?
A. If so, which ones?
B. Why these particular ones?
3. What role would preventative medicine have?
4. Would everyone have equal access to medical treatment?
If not, who would have preferential treatment?
Why?
5. How would your utopia deal with mental illness?
Would psychotherapeutic approaches be used?
a. If so, which ones?
b. Why?
6. Would psychiatric drugs be used?
7. Would "death with dignity" (voluntary euthanasia) be allowed in your utopia?

XVI. Alcohol and Other Drugs

1. Would alcohol be allowed in your utopia?
If so, what if any restrictions would be placed on its use?
2. Would tobacco be allowed?
If so, what if any restrictions would be placed on its use?
3. Would marijuana be allowed?
If so, what if any restrictions would be placed on its use?
4. Would other drugs be allowed?
A. If so, which ones?

B. What if any restrictions would be placed on their use?

XVII. Antisocial Behavior and Conflict Resolution

1. How would your utopia deal with those who harm others?

A. Force them to undergo psychiatric treatment?

B. Shun them?

C. Banish them?

D. Imprison them?

E. Kill them?

2. Would your utopia have a formalized system for dealing with criminal behavior?

A. If not, would it be dealt with by the community as a whole?

B. Would punishment be meted out by victim(s), their families, and friends?

3. How would your utopia deal with self-destructive behaviors?

4. How would it deal with conflicts between individuals?

5. Would there be a means of private mediation?

6. Would there be a means of public mediation?

7. Would your utopia ban guns?

8. Would your utopia ban other types of weapons?

If so, what types?

XVIII. Military/War

1. Would your utopia abolish war, or if a small society would one of its goals be the abolition of war?

2. Until war is abolished, would your utopia have some kind of self-defense force?

A. If so, would it be a conventional army with a rank system and chain of command?

B. If not as a conventional army, how would your self-defense force be organized?

a. As a militia?
aa. If so, who would be its members?
b. How would weapons be controlled?
bb. And by whom?
3. Would any types of weapons be banned?
A. If so, which ones?
B. Why?

These questions are not intended to be definitive; obviously, a list such as this can never be complete. If you'd have any suggestions for additional questions or other improvements, we'd appreciate hearing from you via e-mail.

We want to put our ideas into practice, and to that end we're including a summary of our utopian vision below. Because providing answers to all of the above questions would take up considerably more space than the questions themselves, we've included only a summary here; still, this does give a reasonable view of our goals, desires, and beliefs. We'd love to hear from those of you who have similar visions, so please contact us if you'd want to discuss any of the ideas presented in this pamphlet.

A SMALL-SCALE UTOPIA

We envision both an intentional community and, eventually, a global utopia. The goal of the intentional community would be to serve as a model which would, we hope, inspire others to emulate it, contributing to a wave of evolutionary change. Its fundamental values and concepts would be a high degree of individual freedom coupled with a high degree of individual responsibility, voluntary cooperation, mutual aid, freedom of association (and freedom to disassociate) democratic decision making, ecological sustainability, feminism, the personal as political, personal development, creative (especially artistic) involvement, dealing openly with emotional and sexual issues, and healing the rift between the sexes. In short, we'd want a community whose dual goals were broad social change and personal transformation (which we see as inextricably tied). Because we believe that a small-scale utopia will (obviously) be much easier to achieve in the short run than a global utopia, we're first outlining our vision for an intentional community rather than a global utopia.

In the community we envision, we would want to work with only those who share our fundamental goals, values, and commitments. To attempt to be more "inclusive" would lead to loss of focus. So, finding the right people would be our first goal.

In regard to the physical site, we would want to avoid social stratification through having either common ownership, renting, or a land trust, with all those living there contributing to the costs. We do not want a stratified community with owners and renters.

As for children, we like the ZEGG model, in which children live collectively with a few adult caretakers in a "children's house." Their parents interact with them as much or as little as is mutually agreeable, which we believe is healthier than inescapable, nuclear family interaction. As to education, we would prefer a "free school" environment, such as those pioneered by Francisco Ferrer and Paolo Freire, rather than forcing children to endure captivity in "public" (government) indoctrination centers, where they'd learn skills and attitudes designed to turn them into interchangeable parts.

The decision-making/political structure we envision is what was once commonly called "participatory democracy." In a community setting, this means that there would be no government (or individual rulers), but rather that the entire community would make major decisions at open forums, and that there would be attempts to reach consensus before resorting to voting. It also means that there would be considerable delegation of decision making on minor matters to work groups, with their decisions subject to revocation by the community as a whole if controversy arose.

The easiest way for an intentional community to operate economically is to have everyone pay an equal amount for the community's upkeep (food, rent, utilities, etc.). Due to the economies of scale, this usually works out to a substantial savings over the amount one spends in what-passes-for-normal society. Ideally, we would want a community featuring income and wealth sharing, but it's a mistake to rush into such things. So, at least to start, we would want a community based only on expense sharing.

We do, however, foresee a community with cooperative and individual businesses; but we would not want to make economic activity the focus of the community. Due to the low living expenses and the economies of communitarian living, we'd expect that those involved would work less than people in consumerist society, and would thus have a considerable amount of time to devote to political work, creative activities, relationships, etc.—in sum, setting up and participating in a counter-institution.

One of the primary focuses of the community we envision would be healing the rift between the sexes and building a society based on partnership rather than domination. This has several implications. First, it would mean that there would be no rigid gender roles, and that men and women would have equal rights and responsibilities. Second, sexual freedom would be encouraged, and men and women would be equally free. Third, experimentation in relationships would also be encouraged, with there being no one "right" kind of relationship (as, in consumerist society, with the nuclear family), as long as relationships were between consenting adults. Another focus would be freeing individuals (especially women) from the burdens of child care, through collective child rearing. Finally, problems of sexual jealousy and possessiveness would be, when necessary, publicly (and compassionately) processed rather than, as at present, in both "straight" society and most intentional communities, ignored.

Science would not be a major focus of our community, but it would not be anti-science, anti-rational, or anti-technology; in fact, it would be pro-science and scientifically aware. The primary reason for this is that intentional communities have limited resources, so scientific/technological efforts would necessarily be

focused on inexpensive, low-tech approaches, especially in the ecological/environmental area, which is probably the most critical area of research at the present time. This means things such as sewage disposal/recycling, passive and active solar designs, “green” archi-tecture, and organic agriculture projects.

Our community would not have any formal religion. Instead, it would be united through common dedication to the values, goals, and ideals listed above. Our guiding philosophy (“religion,” if you will) would be the desire to transform the world into a free and loving place, coupled with the belief that everything is intimately connected (the personal, political, economics, the arts, sexuality, nature, etc.) and that a holistic approach is needed for transformation. It would emphasize the personal as political, and especially sexuality, emotions, and love, which we consider key areas.

The arts would be a central part of daily life, with all members encouraged to pursue their interests and develop them to their full potential. This would mean that time would be set aside specifically for artistic pursuits and that a high priority would be placed on giving artists (musicians, dancers, writers, etc.) the physical means necessary to pursue their visions.

Another priority would be communications media, because we see our envisioned community as not only being a model, but as actively promoting that model and its ideals. This would mean active participation in any branch of the media members desired, and an emphasis on providing the means and training for community members who wished to work in the media.

Physically, we envision an urban eco-village. This means that environmentally friendly designs and practices would be followed wherever feasible. This would manifest itself in such things as organic gardening, the use of earth-friendly building methods (such as straw bale construction), incorporation of solar heating and cooling features into all buildings, and a pedestrian/ bicycle-friendly design. While economics might dictate acquiring and retrofitting (an) existing building(s) (such as an old hotel, motel, or warehouse) we'd want to make such buildings as ecologically friendly as possible.

Food choice would also be guided by ecological principles, and, at least in common kitchens, would be restricted to vegetarian food. This has the advantages of being cheaper, simpler, and healthier than omnivorous diets. And, most importantly, it's kinder to animals.

The use of drugs and alcohol would not be a central part of our community, and we'd hope that community members would forego use of the worst drugs, such as tobacco. Because of possible legal (and health and social) problems, we'd want there to be no use of illegal drugs, and we'd want the use of the legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, to be limited. In the case of tobacco, use would be confined to an area set aside for tobacco smoking, well away from living and common areas.

When anti-social behavior arose, we feel that the best way to deal with it would be openly in public processes. If these failed to resolve the problem, the community would have the right to ask disruptive individuals to leave. To avoid abuse of this process, a super-majority vote (consensus minus two or three) of the full community would be necessary before individuals could be expelled.

Finally, one of the primary goals of the community would be to end violence. This goal would manifest itself in the day-to-day life of the community, and we'd hope it would, through emulation, eventually become a wider social reality.

A GLOBAL UTOPIA

Our global utopia would in many ways mirror our community utopia. We would want a world based on individual freedom, voluntary cooperation, mutual aid, democratic decision making, ecological sustainability, equality between the sexes and races, and a fair distribution of the world's resources— in other words, a world of equals, not haves and have-nots.

All of this means that individuals would have far greater power over their own lives (both at home and at work) than they do at present, and that work of all kinds would be cooperatively organized and coordinated. This would be diametrically opposite to what now exists in both the capitalist and the "communist" countries, where small elites in fixed positions of power order around everyone else at the figurative, and sometimes literal, point of a gun.

We see education as an essential component of this utopia. In it, competition for grades and position would be eliminated. Instead, children would be encouraged to follow their own interests and to develop their critical thinking abilities. Again, this is the exact opposite of what now exists, where children are forced into a type of Pavlovian conditioning featuring bells, whistles, and domination/ submission rituals, and in which they are taught skills useful to others (government, corporations) rather than to follow their own interests.

As for political institutions, we believe that people are capable of organizing along voluntary, cooperative lines to manage the essential institutions of society. This means an end to coercive, hierarchical organization (government,

corporations) and an economy managed by those who produce and distribute goods and services. This is not a pipe dream. It came near to fruition during the Spanish Revolution (1936–1939), and likely would have were it not for the intervention of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union. A good description of how such a democratic, egalitarian system would function is found in Michael Albert's book, Looking Forward.

One of the essential features in our utopia would be equality between the sexes. We'd want a world in which no one was discriminated against because of race, appearance, or sexual orientation.

In regard to individual behavior, we would want tolerance for any and all behavior up to the point where it becomes directly harmful to others or obnoxiously intrusive.

Science and technology would be important features of our utopia. We'd want a world in which basic scientific research was encouraged, and in which development of appropriate technology was a priority. We would, however, want careful study of the likely ecological and social impacts of technologies before they were developed. (This contrasts greatly with the present, in which the focus is almost solely on potential profitability.) We would also want to abandon nuclear power and weapons technologies. And we'd want to re-evaluate a number of technologies which have obvious dangers, such as the automobile, cloning, and genetic engineering. One area in which we'd want technological development to continue, and in fact accelerate, would be space exploration/colonization. A related desire would be use of technology to expand the range of areas in which humans can live (thus reducing pressure on environmentally sensitive areas).

Religion as we know it—institutions, hoary rituals, and "sacred" texts—would fade away. We'd hope that a way of life based on ecological awareness, social consciousness, and a loving concern for our fellow humans and other creatures would replace what up until now has passed for "religion." As social misery abates, we'd expect a concomitant decline in traditional religions.

The arts and the media would be important in our utopia, but their roles would be very different from what they are now. Instead of being the province of corporations and the "gifted few," they would be open to participation by all. In fact, everyone would be encouraged to participate in them—the exact opposite of the present situation in which few people participate in the arts (and even fewer are rewarded for doing so), and in which small elites control the communications media, with almost everyone else reduced to being spectators. We want to reverse this situation; we want to eliminate the communications conglomerates and allow everyone with the desire to have an equal opportunity to participate actively in the arts and media.

Physically, our cities would be very different from those at present. Ultimately, we envision high-density living and working spaces surrounded by parks, agricultural areas, and wilderness, along the lines of Paolo Soleri's "arcologies" (car-free, high-density, ecological cities). As a bridge, there is much that could be done now to create more livable cities (and to eliminate the ongoing destruction of wilderness and farm lands). First, resources should be shifted away from the private automobile and its supporting mechanisms. Instead, resources should be allocated to alternative forms of transportation such as light railed vehicles, trains, buses,

and bicycle paths. Cities should also be made much more pedestrian friendly, with parts of them becoming automobile-free zones. As well, any new develop-ment should come within already-developed areas, not in outlying farming or wilderness areas. All of this would eliminate sprawl, reduce pollution (from automobiles), reduce the amount of time spent commuting, and facilitate social interaction.

Agriculture and the treatment of animals would also be very different from the present. Chemical-based corporate factory farming, and especially the mass production of animals for food, would have to go. Factory farming is in the process of destroying our best agricultural lands (and has already done so in many areas, such as parts of California's central valley), and must be replaced by sustainable, smaller-scale, organic cooperative farming, which among other things would not systematically poison agricultural workers.

The meat industry as we know it would cease to exist. It's simply too cruel to continue. For example, chickens today are routinely crowded together in tiny cages with their beaks burned off so that they won't peck each other to death out of frustration. As well, factory-farm production of meat produces vastly degraded lands (via overgrazing), disease-resistant microbes (via misuse of antibiotics), and vast amounts of pollution, especially from hog farms with lagoons filled with millions upon million of gallons of pig excrement. A simpler approach based on local organic agricultural would be healthier for both people and the environment.

Medical care would be a universal right and would be geared toward preventative medicine, through creating a

mentally and physically healthy society. Today, in contrast, most people's lives are so unsatisfying that there are epidemics of preventable health problems such as obesity, addiction to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and simple inactivity due to depression, car dependency, etc. In a healthier society, we would expect obesity, addictions, and depression to gradually disappear as the reasons for them disappear.

One of the great problems in making the transition from our present society to a healthier one is the matter of dealing with anti-social individuals. This is a serious problem, and one for which there is no obvious, completely adequate solution. Our present society produces severely antisocial, dangerous people, and has obviously not found an effective way of dealing with these people, who it produces in droves. We'd also note that the present means of dealing with criminal behavior (police, courts, prisons) is not only cruel (especially in the case of those arrested for victimless "crimes"), but it actually produces more criminal behavior than it prevents, as many sociological studies have shown. We would also point out that exclusive reliance on the police/prison system discourages social cohesion/citizen social involvement, which is the best means of discouraging and dealing with antisocial behavior.

In a transitional society, one would expect a variety of means of dealing with the criminals left over from authoritarian, corporate society. One would hope that most disputes could be resolved through mediation; but one would also expect that victims would sometimes retaliate against those who harmed them. Although in some cases this would be undesirable, at least in the absence of the current legal system victims who retaliate would not, as at present, be victimized a second time by the criminal

injustice system (while their victimizers often walk free). In extreme cases, one would expect there to be a mechanism for banishment. While this is far from a perfect solution, it is undoubtedly better than the present nightmare of cops, judges, courts, and prisons—a system which has always been a source of atrocious injustice and victimization of the innocent.

In the long run, one would expect that the number of antisocial individuals would decline, because the social conditions that produce them (poverty, artificial scarcity, racism, sexism, sexual repression [and consequent perversion], etc.) would have vanished. Even in the best of circumstances, this will take decades, and in the meantime the problem of antisocial individuals will continue. There is no perfect solution to the problem of antisocial behavior, but this is hardly a reason to perpetuate the society that is producing this problem.

In regard to war, we envision a global utopia bound together not by military force, but by economic, social, and cultural ties. In the absence of nation states, and in the presence of a multitude of ties between different societies and peoples—and in the absence of the profit motive and its stepchild, economic imperialism—it seems certain that war would vanish. This—a nonviolent, free, egalitarian world—would be the end result of moving from a corporate/government-controlled society rooted in fear, to one based on voluntary cooperation, mutual aid, and love.